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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

ARNOLD KETTLE — HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ROBBINS REPORT

REUBEN FALBER — A SHORT GUIDE TO THE TORY PARTY

STANLEY MITCHELL — GEORG LUKACS AND THE HISTORICAL NOVEL

DISCUSSION:
GEORGE BURN — WHAT DOES MUSIC EXPRESS?

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Marxism Today

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CONTENTS

		page
	Editorial Comments	353
Arnold KETTLE	**Higher Education and the Robbins Report**	358
Reuben FALBER	**A Short Guide to the Tory Party**	363
Stanley MITCHELL	**Georg Lukacs and the Historical Novel**	374
DISCUSSION: George BURN	**What Does Music Express?** ...	382

AMONG ARTICLES IN JANUARY AND FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Idris COX	**Africa and Socialism**
Dennis GOODWIN	**The Shop Stewards**
William LAUCHLAN	**Role of the Communist Party**
R. F. WILLETTS	**Ernst Fischer on Art**
Ernst FISCHER	**Art and Superstructure**
Jack COHEN	**The State of the Whole People**
John LEWIS	**Marx on Alienation**
Maurice HOOKHAM	**Marxism, Sociology and Class**
Martin MILLIGAN	**Marxism and Ethics**

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Editorial Comments

IN the debate on wages policy which is now developing merrily, we must not lose sight of Mr. Maudling's remarks at the Bankers' Dinner on October 16th, where he told the assembled oligarchs:

> "You can see in the recent and remarkable increase of British exports to Western Europe, where wages and prices have been rising much faster than ours, a clear example of the benefits that can flow to us if we keep our income levels stable, and therefore keep our prices competitive" (*Financial Times,* October 17th).

This is a very remarkable admission. For have not the National Economic Development Council (Neddy), the Tory Government, and the T.U.C. General Council been telling us that British wages and the price of British exports have been rising much faster than those of their capitalist rivals in the recent period? Now we are told that they have been rising much slower.

The T.U.C. General Council would have been much more profitably employed had it examined the basis of the Government's assertion that British wages were rising much too fast (now admitted to be untrue) instead of rushing to accept this quite misleading falsehood.

It is worth while noting that this key phrase of Mr. Maudling was in most cases omitted from most press accounts of his speech. Indeed, when one looks at what business men and economists are saying to each other about incomes policy, one finds some surprising admissions.

Wage Restraint

Last April the Business Economists' Group held a seminar on *Incomes Policies* at Oxford from which a number of useful points emerged.

Here is Mr. Bavinck of Philips, the famous Dutch electronics firm, discussing the effect of wage restraint on the profits of the big firms:

> "It is clear that where the directed incomes policy is orientated towards the average, the economically stronger companies will find themselves in a favourable position as far as profits are concerned. The last penny is not squeezed out [of the firms]."

"Orientated towards the average" means towards accepting the Neddy figures on what should be the permitted rate of wage increase. Here it is admitted that "as far as profits are concerned" the effect of this policy is to the advantage of the large firms.

On the other hand if wages are restrained this enables small and medium firms to "get by" because they do not have to pay as substantial wage increases as formerly. This confirms them in their policy of stagnation. There are far too many such firms in British Industry, says Mr. Bavinck:

> "The industrialist works too under the stimuli of incentives which derive from competition and incentives which are brought about through rising costs resulting from increases in wages, salaries and social costs. *The danger exists that because of relatively low labour costs, there will be too little incentive directed towards mechanisation, automation, better production methods or more efficient designs.* In a more general sense, there is also the danger that products will continue to be manufactured which, given a higher level of labour costs, would no longer be maintained in production" (italics ours).

So in spite of all the talk about modernisation, wage restraint enables sub-normal firms, which have neither the intention nor the ability to modernise, to last a little longer.

Incentive Payments

Much has been written about the danger of trade unions losing contact with their members. Mr. Bavinck thinks there is a danger that wage restraint may accelerate this trend.

> "A central wages policy involves a situation in which the trade unions play an important role, a role at high level in conjunction with the employers' associations and the Government. As I have already mentioned [in Holland, where full wage restraint is in operation] direct confrontation with the employer in the wages struggle has been removed, *and the idea of marching forward shoulder to shoulder with the workers has lost a great deal of its former significance. One might say that the bayonet and rifle has been exchanged for more scientific equipment. No wonder that contact between trade unions and their members is weakened and the danger of an organisation losing its roots looms ahead*" (italics ours).

Mr. Bavinck thinks that the unions will have

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to seek new "fields of interest", but the danger he alludes to is obviously there.

One of the tricky questions of wages policy is its relation to individual or group incentive payments. Suppose the decision is that wage increases should not rise above $3\frac{1}{4}$ or $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per year and suppose a worker on incentive payments increases his output, so that under the incentive payments schemes he would be entitled to an increase of 6 or 7 per cent on his earnings. Either the 3-$3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent "guiding light" has to go, or the incentive schemes.

In a lecture delivered to this conference Professor Ben Roberts of the London School of Economics escapes from this dilemma by advocating the abolition of incentive payments.

> "In this respect I would rate the elimination of all those fancy payments systems known as incentive schemes, as one of the most urgent policies in the British business scene at the present time. Here is one of the most prolific sources of uncontrolled wage movement."

The supporters of incomes policies have wisely kept silent on the relations of their nostrum to incentive payments. They should be forced to come clean.

An incomes policy, Professor Roberts admits, means the end of collective bargaining as we know it. "In the long run we will have to get rid of collective bargaining as we know it and I am speculating on a very long-run now."

Trade unionists please note.

Automation Prospects

Since Mr. Harold Wilson at Scarborough mentioned automation and socialism in the same breath, interest in the actual development of automation has grown. So let us introduce Mr. John J. Snyder who is President of U.S. Industries Incorporated, a large producer of automation equipment.

Addressing a conference on automation in Geneva in December last year Mr. Snyder said:

> "Recently, in America, anyone who says that automation is going to put people out of work has been considered a 'prophet of doom'. Some experts say that automation actually creates jobs —that everyone will always be employed because it takes people to make machines and keep them running.
>
> "One expert cites the automobile industry as a good example. 'When the auto became popular,' he says, 'it knocked out trades like carriage building and harness making. But it created 100 jobs for everyone it obsoleted.'
>
> "Well I disagree. That might have been the case in the long run but as Lord Keynes suggested in the long run we are all dead. Today, Detroit is one of the centres of automation and it is also one of our country's largest and most critical areas of unemployment. In Detroit at least, automation has not created jobs."

At the same conference a well-known trade union leader Mr. A. J. Hayes of the International Association of Machinists (the American A.E.U.) said:

> "In 1953, following the Korean war, only 3 per cent of the workforce was unemployed. Since that time the proportion of the workforce that is idle has crept up little by little and year by year and now the rate of chronic, continuing, and seemly irreducible unemployment is 6 per cent.
>
> "If this trend continues, by 1970 no less than 10 per cent of the workforce—or 8 million workers—will be unable to find employment of any kind in the American economy."

So improved technique can be quite destructive, under capitalism. Only a socialist planned economy can use it in the interest of all.

Who Owns America?

The American magazine *Fortune* recently published its annual list of the 500 largest U.S. industrial corporations for the year 1962. For the giants, *Fortune* reports, 1962 was "an excellent year".

These 500 top concerns now account for more than half the sales and 70 per cent of the profits of *all* U.S. manufacturing and mining companies. In 1962 their sales increased 9.5 per cent reaching a record of $229.1 billion, whilst their profits rose by 16.1 per cent over the previous year reaching another record of $135 billion. This is without making allowances for various ingenious devices for profit concealment.

In both 1961 and 1962 the same twelve top industrial concerns headed the list—three automobile companies, four oil, two electrical equipment giants, U.S. Steel, Swift (meat packing) and du Pont (chemical). These twelve alone accounted for 37 per cent of the profits of the top 500 and 26 per cent of the profits of *all* industrial corporations in the United States. At the top of the top, well to the fore, stands General Motors with Standard Oil (New Jersey) runner-up.

It is perhaps not surprising that *Fortune* did not think it necessary to discuss the participation (or rather lack of participation) of the American people in the boom of the giants. But it is important to note that in the top twelve industrial corporations, whilst sales rose by 14.7 per cent in 1962 and profits by 22.5 per cent, *employment only rose 7 per cent.* The Labour Research Association of the United States estimates that *for the whole top* 500 the rise of employment was *not more than 4 or 5 per cent.* We can see from

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this how mass unemployment is maintained even in a relatively boom year.

In another list, *Fortune* shows that the top fifty U.S. commercial banks, show combined assets of $118.6 billion, a rise of 7 per cent over 1961. The assets of the top fifty insurance companies ($116 billion) were likewise up by some 5 per cent. In transportation the most gigantic of the giants remains the American Telephone and Telegraph Co. with assets of around $26.7 billion, without counting the billions of dollars of its manufacturing subsidiaries.

Whilst we are in the realms of the billionaires, we should note another interesting article, this time in the September 13th, 1963, issue of the *New York Times* (business section), written by John H. Allan, and published under the heading "Multibillionaire stockholders still Rule Big Business".

Allan estimates that persons with annual incomes of over $100,000—fewer than 0.1 per cent of the taxpaying population of the United States —own over 19.5 per cent of all the stock in the country. Those with incomes of over $25,000 own about half (48 per cent) of all the shares.

Neither *Fortune* nor the business section of the *New York Times* are notorious for their Marxism-Leninism, but the picture they present is a modern version of Lenin's *Imperialism*. With ever-accelerating mergers and take-overs, and increasing ruin of small concerns, ever more wealth and power are being concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer. Hardly a picture of "people's capitalism" or "property-owning democracy".

National Question in Canada

About a century and a quarter ago a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into a conflict in Canada. A celebrated passage in the Commission's Report opened with these words:

> "I found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state: I found a struggle, not of principles, but of races; and I perceived that it would be idle to attempt any amelioration of laws or institutions, until we could first succeed in terminating the deadly animosity that now separates the inhabitants of Lower Canada into hostile divisions of French and English."

Lord Durham in putting forward the "solution" was quite definite on one thing, that to attempt "to preserve a French-Canadian nationality" would be a "vain endeavour".

It seems certain that the Canadian Government's present Royal Commission on "Bilingualism and Biculturalism" in Canada will once again try to confuse and distort the national question of Canada and to bury the essential issue of Canada's binational nature beneath phrases about race, biculturalism and cultural autonomy.

All the more welcome, therefore, is the initiative of our colleagues of the Editorial Board of the Canadian *Marxist Quarterly* in turning their autumn number into a special issue on the national question in Canada under the title *Crisis of Confederation*.

The approach of Canadian Communists is that Canada is a binational state comprising the French-Canadian nation and the Anglo-Canadian (or "English-speaking Canadian") nation. The former is a long-established relatively homogeneous national community, the latter is of more recent formation.

Marxist Quarterly contains articles examining the question from diverse viewpoints—historical, economic, social. Leslie Morris exposes the present Government's "biculturalism" (*Mr. Pearson's "Biculturalism" and the Reactionary Device of "Cultural Autonomy"*). He shows that the entire state structure of Canada, with its eleven parliaments for fewer than 20 million people, its maze of regional conflicts, its elevation of "provincial rights" evades the real issue, and is in deep crisis:

> "What we really have in Canada is not ten provinces, but the French-Canadian nation in Quebec and the English-Canadian nation divided into nine provinces or regions, none of which are nations, but all of whom belong to the English-Canadian nation. . . ."

There is no problem of "biculturalism" or of "bilingualism" in Canada, he writes. What there *is* is the problem of preservation of French culture, language, tradition, territory, economy and psychology in a French-Canadian state:

> "What is needed is not a Royal Commission, but a Constituent Assembly of the Canadian peoples; not an Assembly of nine English provinces and one French-Canadian, but of the two nations, equally represented. Not nine to one, but one to one."

Textbook of Political Economy

We are glad to see that Lawrence & Wishart published last month a fresh edition of John Eaton's *Political Economy: a Marxist Textbook*, as a new-style paperback at 21s.

This textbook has been used over the years by a very large number of students of Marxism, not only in Britain, but in Canada, Australia, the U.S.A., Italy, Japan, and other countries.

It was originally published in 1949, as the outcome of a series of discussions held by Marxist economists in London. Since then it has been reprinted seven times, and the total sale, in this country alone, has exceeded 15,000.

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The continuous demand over the years is itself a testimony to the textbook's value. It is, indeed, an excellent job of work of which British Marxists may well be proud—simple, yet comprehensive; popular, but baulking none of the complex questions.

The new edition is not substantially different from previous ones. But, naturally, the years of experience and the many discussions that have taken place since the original edition have suggested new ways of presenting some of the points.

The whole text has been worked over. But the chief modifications have been made in the chapters on economic crisis and on the distribution of the national income. A new section has been added explaining and criticising Keynesian theory; and the last three chapters have been compressed into a single concluding chapter on future perspectives and socialism.

We are sure that many more classes and discussions will be held on the basis of this textbook of economics, and that many new readers will turn to it for their introduction to the Marxist science of political economy.

Art for Schools

Edinburgh's modern art gallery is a sober grey-stone eighteenth century house set among the trees and green lawns of the Botanic Gardens. Last month one of its three floors was given over to a special exhibition of pictures bought by education authorities for use in schools.

Six county councils lent pictures from their collections—Argyll, Derbyshire, Durham, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, West Riding and Manchester City Art Galleries. It is clear that very few other local authorities buy original pictures at all.

The pictures include abstracts and still lifes; the rich sombre landscapes of McTaggart and the lively industrial scenes of Lowry. There are none of those distressing nursery subjects usually thought to be "suitable" for children.

These collections have been made by enterprising education authorities who realise that "live" pictures are a far better introduction to art than reproductions, and evoke a quite different response.

They are mostly bought from yearly exhibitions of "Pictures for Schools" which have been held every year since 1947 and "Pictures for Welsh Schools" held each year since 1951.

Douglas Hall, Keeper of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art gives these facts in his illuminating introduction to the catalogue. He regrets that so far the only Scottish education authority to purchase original works for this purpose is Argyll and urges Scotland to follow the lead of Wales. Eight Scottish painters are represented and he feels that their work has qualities of strength and directness which make them specially suitable for schools.

He also suggests that leading painters whose work is too expensive for poverty-stricken local authorities to buy should be asked to make special concessions.

It is interesting that one of the results of the exhibition has been that the Edinburgh Education Department decided to spend £250 on original pictures. This may not seem a great sum, but it is a good beginning.

Films and Profits

Once again the film industry is exhibiting some crazy-seeming contrasts. Look, for instance, at some very different statistics, published in the same issue of a recent film trade paper (*Kinematograph Weekly*, 24.10.63). First, the official Board of Trade figures for the cinema side of the industry for 1962, such as total number of cinemas operating in Great Britain at the end of that year: 2,421—compared with 2,711 a year before; total cinema admissions for 1962: 394,963,000—compared with 449,114,000 in 1961. And so on . . . "a decline" in gross box-office takings, "a drop" in the payments to the British Film Production Fund, "a fall" in the exhibitors' share of box-office takings—all the pounds and the percentages showed a similar downward trend (though lower percentages show some sections of the industry hit less than others).

Turn from such figures, prepared by the Statistics Division of the Board of Trade, to others, which though proclaimed in a full-page colour advertisement in the same paper—inch-and-three-quarter figures and triple exclamation marks, so traditional in the bizarre quarters of show business, included—are no less authentic. These referred to but one film, and in a period before its general release: the second James Bond vehicle, *From Russia With Love;* its distributors, United Artists, immodestly tell of "The Most Sensational Business in the History of the Film Industry", with £14,528 taken in the first seven days of the film's presentation at the Odeon in London's Leicester Square; they add that, not only has that theatre's all-time record been smashed, but of twenty-nine pre-releases a result of "twenty-nine all-time records!" were obtained.

This one film is not the exception that proves the gloomy rule—yet the very successes of some films are paradoxically causing despondency. The point was illustrated a few weeks earlier by another United Artists picture, *The Great Escape;*

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so successful was it, during its pre-release and its general release, that it was held over for a second week in a substantial number of cinemas, so making a serious dent in the earning potential of the film due to follow it. (As has been made clear in these notes before, films these days are accompanied by expensive and concentrated publicity, which can only hope to bear fruit if the release pattern is a reasonably concentrated one, too, and not split up into a week in one town here, another nearby town a week later, and a third neighbour later still.)

The producer and renter of a hit picture will naturally welcome this new trend, but what about the people with only a moderate success? Or those (whose plight was detailed in these notes in September) who are patiently queueing up with their picture, cap in hand, awaiting a favourable date from the cinema circuits, while the interest they have to pay on the money they borrowed to make the film is menacingly mounting up? Equally anxious are the artists, technicians and craftsmen, who make the films, whose direct recompense, of course, is the same, whether they are working on a potential winner or a potential flop.

They realise that no panacea is available, as the kind of Board of Trade statistics, quoted above, are typical of those over the past decade or so. While the market for films continually contracts, the need for film-making in capitalist Britain contracts as well—and the monopolies successfully carry out their policy of seeking maximum profits. Understandably, the entertainment-makers in films turn their eyes hopefully to the still expanding field of British TV with the B.B.C.-2 Kangaroo hopping nearer and nearer every week; and, whatever might be the social effects of I.T.V.-2 and/or coin-in-the-slot TV, the job-hungry film people will welcome these prospects as well. While hunger may often blunt conscience, British film-makers have a strong tradition of pride in their work, so the public need have little fear in making common cause with them; together they can be an invaluable force against the monopolists of entertainment business, whose first—and motive—consideration is the making of the highest possible profit.

Thomas Paine Again

The organisers of the newly formed Thomas Paine Society (preliminary details of which were given in these notes last October), report a response at the inaugural meeting in London's Conway Hall well beyond even optimistic expectations.

An observer at the meeting noted the variety of those attending: from freethinking admirers of the deist Paine, through diverse strata of progressive Britain to an occasional Conservative or two; all keen, in the words of a unanimous resolution passed, "to promote the recognition of Thomas Paine's contribution to the cause of freedom"; the suggestions for the Society's activities ranged equally widely—historians wanted local and national research and the publishing of papers, others put forward ideas for articles in trade union journals, the erecting of commemorative plaques in places frequented by the great writer, an assault on misleading history books, and the reintroduction of the once traditional British custom of celebrating Paine's birthday at the end of January with a dinner or a more modest drinking of a toast.

The meeting fixed the annual subscription for members at a minimum of 10s.; old age pensioners, schoolchildren over fifteen and students a minimum of 5s., and overseas members a minimum of 7s. 6d., and appointed Michael Foot, M.P., as its President with Bertrand Russell, O.M., Herbert Cutner, the noted freethinking writer, G. R. Blaydon (a former Mayor and Town Clerk of Paine's birthplace, Thetford in Norfolk), and Joseph Lewis (Secretary of the Thomas Paine National Foundation of the U.S.A.) as Vice-Presidents. A ten-man Council was also elected, as well as R. W. Morrell as Secretary; the latter's address is 443 Meadow Lane, Nottingham, and further details are available from him.

"*Mainstream*"

Welcome to *Mainstream*, the new journal published by the National Student Committee of the Communist Party (termly, sixpence).

The first issue contains an interesting study of *Britain Approaching an Election* by Emile Burns, an article by Stephen Sedley on *Folksong, Roots and Directions*, and an examination by Ray Watkinson of *The Art Schools under Attack*.

We would draw the attention of the readers to the opening Editorial which describes the terror in Iraq which followed the *coup d'état* of February 8th this year.

Amongst the tens of thousands of victims of massacre, torture and repression are many students, some of whom graduated in Britain. The only university in Iraq is at Baghdad. Its Dean was dismissed, imprisoned, tortured, and is now paralysed. During February and March, 107 professors and members of staff were dismissed and many imprisoned. Iraqi students still in Britain, many of whom have lost members of their family in the terror, are also threatened.

Mainstream very rightly calls for protest and solidarity.

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Higher Education and the Robbins Report

Arnold Kettle

SINCE excessively high claims are being made about the significance of the Robbins Committee Report on Higher Education—"a landmark in social history", "a new era" etc.—it is as well to begin by offering a more objective general estimate. The Robbins Report puts forward proposals which, if they are implemented, will satisfy certain minimum needs for the development of British higher education over the next twenty years or so. They will not bring about an expansion in our higher education comparable to that being made in either the United States, within a capitalist framework, or the Soviet Union, within a socialist one. Even if the Committee's most sanguine plans and figures are accepted the percentage of the age group expected to complete higher education in 1971-2 would be, for Great Britain, 12 per cent, compared with 29 per cent in the U.S.A. and 24 per cent in the U.S.S.R.

The Robbins Report is to be sincerely welcomed not because it heralds some sort of millennium but because, despite a number of weaknesses (some of them, as we shall see, grave enough), it represents a serious attempt to do something which has not been done on this level in Britain before —to plan a system of higher education which bears some recognisable relation to social needs and potentialities. And if the aims the Report proposes are, judged by those needs and potentialities, relatively modest it must be added that decades of ignoring or underestimating the problems involved have made the possibilities of more spectacular advance small indeed.

Communist Party Evidence

In its Evidence submitted to the Robbins Committee in July 1961 the Communist Party said:

> "It is now becoming widely recognised that the system of higher education in Britain today is not only lagging behind that of other advanced industrial countries but is also facing an internal crisis. University education, in England in particular, has always been restricted to a small élite, while the technical and training colleges have been accorded very inferior conditions and status. This situation is a direct reflection of the class character of our society. Determined to maintain its monopoly over higher education, the ruling class has deliberately restricted its growth, and reserved to its own use the main centres of higher education, particularly Oxford and Cambridge. Nevertheless, developments in science and technology and the growing necessity of providing more administrators, teachers etc. on the one hand, and the pressure of the people demanding a more broadly democratic system of education on the other, have resulted in some broadening of the basis of higher education over the last few decades. The apparently haphazard and contradictory course of development is explained by this fundamental conflict of interests, and the establishment of an educational system having as its primary purpose the full and many-sided development of the rich and varied abilities of young people as a whole has not been achieved.
>
> "Such a system, in our view, can only be achieved under socialism. . . . There are, however, a number of immediate and pressing problems in the field of higher education. These are concerned both with the need radically to expand the whole system and so to open opportunities much more widely, and with the need to overcome the rigid lines of demarcation between the main types of institutions, universities, technical colleges and teachers' training colleges, which, although characterised by a wide overlapping of function, differ profoundly in their government, their finance, and, above all, in their facilities for teaching and research. Instead of a system comprising a number of types of institution of unequal status and facilities, an integrated system comprising a variety of institutions of university level must, we believe, be brought into being, and provision made for the overall planning of the system as a whole. These are vitally important questions which urgently require a solution. For this reason we express the hope that the Committee's deliberations will be rapidly brought to a conclusion and result in bold and effective action." (Paras 2-4.)

The Committee's deliberations *have* now been brought to a conclusion and the breadth and thoroughness of their investigations revealed. Their Report does indeed accept a whole number of the proposals put forward by the Communist Party—and at that time put forward by almost no

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one else. Whether this will result in bold and effective action remains to be seen—and fought for. We should certainly not confuse a readiness to make electoral capital out of the Report with a serious determination to implement it. The present crisis in higher education is due not just to inadvertence but to a conscious policy which reached its climax less than two years ago with the Tory Government's deliberate rejection of demands by the University Grants Committee infinitely more modest than those now being so ostentatiously accepted by a Prime Minister who achieved the rare intellectual feat of getting a third at Oxford during the twenties. An atmosphere is being created in which it is being taken for granted that the recommendations of the Robbins Committee will, inevitably and automatically, become reality.

Will it be Implemented?

It is interesting therefore to notice that the two most influential "Establishment" newspapers—*The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*—have been highly critical of the Report. *The Times,* while professing concern over the maintenance of academic standards, reveals its deeper fears in the sentence:

> "The change of scale, the influx of students of questionable academic bent, the thinner spread of first-rate teachers, are bound to influence profoundly the nature and quality of British universities" (24.10.63).

Since no change in the existing academic qualifications of university entrants or in the "spread" (i.e. staff-student ratio) of teachers is proposed in the Report, this can only mean in fact that what *The Times* fears is some change in the existing "nature and quality" (i.e. exclusiveness) of the existing university system.

The *Telegraph's* reaction to the Report was more frank:

> "There is the other side of the question—whether the number of higher-educated people produced by these standards is what the nation's society and economy require. The Committee's plan will mean in the end that 15 per cent of the working population will have completed full-time higher education. This is a thought more awesome than attractive" (24.10.63).

Why the prospect of 15 per cent of the working population with higher-education qualifications (a prospect which, incidentally, the Robbins Committee does not envisage this side of the twenty-first century) should fill the *Telegraph* with such awe is partly explained by the later sentence:

> "The prospective charge of £742 million in 1980 looks forbidding. Some other type of expenditure may have to give way to make room for the new commitment."

It does not need many guesses to divine which other type of expenditure the *Telegraph* is so much afraid of sacrificing to the cause of education.

Such reactions are significant because they remind us not only that the expenditure of the sort of sums envisaged by Lord Robbins' Committee will not be made without a fundamental reorientation of our whole economic, defence and, therefore, foreign policies, but also that, the general election once over, the implementation of the recommendations of the Report will encounter strong and influential opposition and cannot be achieved without a determined struggle.

Basis of the Report

The Robbins Committee Report will, in my opinion, be welcomed by progressive people for two fundamental reasons: (i) it recommends an expansion of the number of students in higher education which, though representing no more than a minimum requirement, is nevertheless, compared to present figures, a substantial and significant expansion; and (ii) it advances an overwhelming case for two essential, and up to now contested, principles. These are (a) that entry into institutions of higher education should depend solely on the obtaining of the necessary academic qualifications, plus of course the desire to go on to a higher level of educational work; and (b) that all such institutions (technical colleges, teachers' training colleges, Colleges of Art and Music, Colleges of Advanced Technology etc. as well as universities) should be regarded as a single complex—Higher Education. Despite the limitations I will refer to, the Report undoubtedly strikes a blow at the hierarchical approach which is concerned only in preserving the privileges of the universities and treats the other institutions as poor relations.

Before discussing the actual problems of expansion it will be worth glancing at the two points of principle just mentioned.

Who Ought to Receive Higher Education?

The reactionary answers to this question always emphasise that very few people are capable of profiting from higher education and that expansion of the universities will therefore inevitably lead to a disastrous lowering of academic standards. "More students means worse" is the argument; "no lowering of standards" the more respectable public slogan.

The Robbins Committee has produced some devastating replies to this sort of argument, so

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popular still among university teachers themselves.

> "We think there is no risk that within the next twenty years the growth in the proportion of young people with qualifications and aptitudes suitable for entry to higher education will be restrained by a shortage of potential ability" (para 146),

they say, and back their conclusion with impressive statistical and factual argument. The "so-called pool of ability", whose imminent drying-up is one of stock warnings of the anti-expansionists (who appear to have been living for the last fifteen years among the "dregs") get short shrift from the Committee who argue, incidentally, that "the belief that there exists some easy method of ascertaining an intelligence factor unaffected by education or background is outmoded". The Report contains a great deal of invaluable information which will be augmented when all the Appendices appear—on the class basis of our educational system, e.g.

> (a) "The proportion of young people who enter full-time higher education is 45 per cent for those whose fathers are in the 'higher professional' group, compared with only 4 per cent for those whose fathers are in skilled manual occupations." (Para 139.)
>
> (b) "It is sometimes imagined that the great increase in recent years in the numbers achieving good school-leaving qualifications has occurred almost entirely among the children of manual workers. This is not so. The increase has been almost as great among the children of professional parents, where the pool of ability might be thought more nearly exhausted." (Para 142.)
>
> (c) "Between 1955 and 1961 the proportion of men students at Oxford and Cambridge who came from State—as opposed to 'public' or 'direct grant' schools actually decreased from 31 to 30 per cent." (Para 218.)

It will be some time before the full significance of the statistical research done in connection with the Report can be assessed. But it is undoubtedly a very rich quarry.

It seems to me, however, important to recognise that, despite the great value of the Committee's findings on the present condition of higher education, the proposals they make, however desirable, are not in themselves going to alter very greatly—and certainly not fundamentally—the class basis of our higher education situation. On the contrary, I think R. H. S. Crossman is probably quite right when he says (*New Statesman*, 1.10.63): "At a rough guess I would estimate that 70 per cent of the children who will follow the Robbins road will come from middle-class homes". I suspect that the overall result of the implementation of the Robbins recommendation would be that higher education, while becoming (as compared with today) significantly more available to working-class children, would become something like the normal thing for middle-class ones. I make this point not to denigrate the progressive character of the Report but to indicate some of the limitations and even dangers inherent in its approach.

A System of Higher Education?

The Robbins Committee points out that there is in this country no existing "system" of higher education.

> "Higher education has not been planned as a whole or developed within a framework consciously devised to promote harmonious evolution." (Para 18.)

In a passage which strikes me as admirable it *insists that:*

> "Institutions of higher education vary both in their functions and in the way in which they discharge them. The vocational emphasis will be more apparent in some than in others. The advancement of learning will be more prominent at the postgraduate than at the undergraduate stage. The extent of participation in the life and culture of the community will depend upon local circumstances. Our contention is that, although the extent to which each principle is realised in the various types of institution will vary, yet, ideally, there is room for at least a speck of each in all. The system as a whole must be judged deficient unless it provides adequately for all of them." (Para 29.)

The limitation of the Report by its own standards here is that it draws too narrow a limit to higher education and excludes from the "system", except in a limited and unsatisfactory way, the level of education generally referred to as "further education" as offered at most of the Regional Area Colleges, Colleges of Art etc. It has little to say, for instance, about part-time students, though the standard of work they do is often as high as those of courses which come within the "higher" orbit. There is substance in the objection made in the press statement of the Association of Teachers in Technical Colleges and Institutes that under the proposals made by Robbins work of university level in Regional and Area Colleges would remain under the Ministry of Education and divorced from work of university standard in other institutions. The serious crisis in the Art Colleges (see the article by Ray Watkinson in the first number of *Mainstream*) is to all intents and purposes ignored by the Robbins Report. I think this is symptomatic of a generally "university-centred" approach. But again one does not raise these points in order to belittle the solid achievement involved, for

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instance, in the proposal to abolish the gap between C.A.T.s and universities and to integrate the Training Colleges (to be called Colleges of Education) more and more into the university system. These are entirely progressive moves and there is no question that the general tendency of the Report is towards a more satisfactory conception of higher education, theoretically and organisationally, than has previously existed in Britain.

Problems of Expansion

At present there are 216,000 students in Great Britain taking full-time courses in higher education. The Robbins Report recommends that this number should be increased by 1973-4 to about 390,000, and by 1980-1 to 560,000, of which 350,000 would be at universities.

To make this increase in numbers possible Robbins recommends the expansion in size (to about 10,000) of most existing universities, the designation of C.A.T.s as universities with power to award degrees, the giving of university status to some ten Regional Colleges, Central Institutions and Colleges of Education, and the founding of six new universities in addition to those in the course of being opened. The Report also recommends the reorganisation of the Training Colleges so that they come within the orbit of the universities instead of, as now, the Local Education Authorities. The plan includes a considerable increase in post-graduate courses in the universities as a key contribution towards the extension and improvement of high-level research work and the production of an adequate number of highly qualified staff to meet the needs of an expanding educational system at all levels, not least higher education itself.

I think the Robbins Committee is justified in saying that the expansion they recommend would bring with it a very extensive transformation of the present situation. The existence of half a million students, whatever the limitations of the system by which they were selected, could scarcely fail to modify the position of the universities as exclusive élite institutions. There is, however, a danger which we should certainly be conscious of. An expansion of higher education without a general all-round improvement of *all* education could raise as many problems as it solves. The great need in this country is for educational reform at the base and not merely in certain branches. Crossman is quite right in reminding us that "the 18-plus can be as cruel and as unjust as the 11-plus". The point was put clearly in the Communist Party's Evidence to the Robbins Committee:

> "Higher education cannot be regarded as an isolated and closed system. On the contrary, the educational process must be seen—and planned for—as a unity. The overall character of the system depends, in an important sense, on the earlier education of the students. If, within the schools, a highly restrictive and selective system dominates, this will be reflected, as at present, in a high degree of early specialisation. This in itself creates a situation where higher education comprises different institutions of different levels and leads to the differentiation of function which is the hall-mark of the present position.
>
> "A main criticism of our present school education is its over-specialised character, especially after the age of fifteen. . . . The function of the secondary [including grammar, A.K.] school should be to give a general all-round education to all its pupils, both boys and girls. . . . Specialisation should be the function of higher education. . . .
>
> "It is to be hoped that the Committee will report in this sense, since changes along these lines would widen the opportunity for entry to higher education." (Paras 40-43.)

The Robbins response to this problem, even allowing for the fact that its terms of reference to some extent limited its treatment of it, is disappointing. The Committee recognises its existence but their comments are so general that it is hard to believe that they will be effective. An example of the kind of problem involved is the rather alarming fact that the swing in recent years towards scientific subjects among university applicants seems to have stopped. This year, though innumerable Arts applicants have been turned away there is actually a shortage of qualified applicants in such subjects as Chemistry and Engineering. Now this is clearly a problem that cannot be isolated on the "higher education" level. The question of a relative shortage of higher education applicants in scientific subjects can only be dealt with in so far as the whole problem of the teaching of science in the schools—not least the girls' schools—is tackled. Nor is this a purely "grammar school" problem. Attitudes and decisions are involved which affect the *whole* of our educational system.

This emphasis on the indivisibility of the whole educational system and the danger of attempting to legislate for higher education in isolation no doubt strengthens the case, argued by Mr. H. C. Shearman in his minority statement, that an enlarged Ministry of Education, rather than the Minister of Arts and Science which the Robbins Committee as a whole recommends, should be responsible on Governmental level for higher education.

I cannot help feeling that there is a danger of

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this particular dispute being seen out of proportion, especially in university circles, where there is particularly strong feeling—some of it well-based, some merely reflecting prejudice—against bringing the universities within the orbit of the Ministry of Education. But the case for a unified ministry is undoubtedly strong and one which progressive people will not lightly reject.

Some Particular Problems

Quite apart from the more general doubts which certain aspects of the Robbins Report raise there are various minor aspects of the Report which need particular attention (I am not suggesting, of course, that the following points are exhaustive).

(i) Student Grants

The Report does make the point that "grants should be assessed on the assumption that students will be occupied with their studies during ten months of the year". This is important, for if students are to make adequate use of their vacations for study (an absolute necessity when courses last only three years in comparison with the four or five usual in other countries), they must be financially independent. This should be an elementary point, but it is not. Apart from the sentence quoted there is no indication that the Robbins Committee realises the need for a thorough reconsideration and reassessment of student grants (and to begin discussing the possibility of loans rather than grants is entirely retrogressive).

(ii) Oxford and Cambridge

The Report recognises many of the bad effects of the favoured position of Oxford and Cambridge and rejects certain proposals (such as turning them into post-graduate institutions) which would indeed make bad matters worse. But when it comes to a positive policy towards this problem the Report is weak. To suggest that

> "Part of the remedy is to be found in closer relations between the men's colleges and the maintained schools, of the kind that have long prevailed between the colleges and independent boys' schools" (para 221)

is to show a totally wrong approach to the whole question. Presumably what is proposed is that there should be closed scholarships to particular colleges from particular grammar schools, just as there are from particular public schools. It would be difficult to conceive of a worse solution. The Communist Party in its Evidence recommended:

> "(1) the abolition of all closed scholarships at Oxford and Cambridge (and elsewhere); (2) putting the selection of students into the hands of the universities rather than the colleges; (3) taking over the endowments of Oxford and Cambridge colleges and allotting them, either to the respective universities (which at present cannot touch them) or to subsidise the university system as a whole." (Para 47.)

Even the somewhat timid proposals of the Labour Party's Taylor Report are a good deal in advance of the Robbins recommendations, though it is clear that the Committee was not unaware of the problems concerned:

> "The number of times when it is necessary to except Oxford and Cambridge from general statements about British universities, the difficulty both universities have in reaching rapid decisions on matters of policy with their present constitutional arrangements, and the general obscurity in which so many of their administrative and financial arrangements are shrouded are not compatible with a situation in which they, like other universities, are largely dependent on public funds. . . . We recommend that, if Oxford and Cambridge are unable satisfactorily to solve these problems within a reasonable time, they should be the subject of independent enquiry."

(iii) University applications and selection

This, as every teacher, parent and prospective student knows, is a nightmare situation, crying out for a new and rational approach. The Robbins Report welcomes the recent establishment of a Central Council of Admissions to handle applications and recommends the extension of its activities to Oxford, Cambridge, Scotland and the C.A.T.s. But the key problem here is what is involved in the word "handle". If all that the Central Council is to do (as at present) is to sort and pass on applications it cannot substantially improve the present situation. What is involved in reality is the right of individual departments with some kind of "pull" to throw the whole applications system out of gear either by imposing unreasonable standards or simply refusing to make up their minds about individual students. A more drastic measure of centralisation is what is needed.

(iv) Internal Government of Universities

Here again there are weaknesses in the Report partly stemming, one suspects, from an unwillingness to tackle the (admittedly tricky) problems of Departmental and professorial autonomy within the universities. If the universities, especially in the period of emergency expansion to meet the post-war population bulge, are to maintain their standards and efficiency and successfully resist the attempts which will certainly be made to dilute conditions and produce an expansion programme "on the cheap", it is essential that all staff engaged in higher education should exercise more respon-

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sibility and control than they normally have at present. Nor is it obvious that existing "lay" (i.e. non-academic) domination of the university councils will help the situation.

Two Political Points

I want to end by making two political points.

The first concerns the effect which the development of higher education in the Soviet Union has obviously had on the Report of Lord Robbins and his committee.

It is clear that the members of the Committee were greatly impressed by the scope and standards of Soviet education for they pay more than one tribute to the Soviet system of higher education. But what is also interesting is that they do not hesitate to use Soviet experience to reflect upon British difficulties. At the end of a passage defending their thesis that substantial expansion is both possible and necessary they remark:

> "We are reinforced in our conclusion by recollection of a conversation with the authorities in the Soviet Union. In the Soviet system of planning much reliance is placed upon projections of manpower requirements, and these are made on a most ambitious scale. When we indicated our difficulties in understanding how, with all the uncertainties as regards invention and the advancement of knowledge generally, reliance could be placed on statistics of requirements for more than a very few years ahead, we were met with the reply that in the Soviet Union there would always be use for people who had been trained to the limit of their potential ability. We do not believe that the Soviet Union is the only country that can make full use of the brains of its people. . . ."

The anecdote seems to me to throw considerable light both on the genesis of the Robbins Report and the virtues of peaceful coexistence.

My final point, which perhaps one should link with the previous one, is to underline the need to see the implementation of the recommendations of the Robbins Committee as a political and not merely an educational issue. For the bare truth is that, unless there is a decisive change in the economic and foreign policies of the British government, Tory or Labour, the Report, despite all the pre-election ballyhoo, will remain on the shelf as yet another Command Paper reflecting the thwarted aspirations of progressive people.

A Short Guide to the Tory Party

Reuben Falber

DESPERATE men need desperate measures. The bitterness of the conflict which preceded the elevation of Home to the leadership of the Conservative Party was provoked by the desperation in ruling class circles at the series of disastrous by-elections in which the Tory vote melted away like the proverbial snowball in Hell.

With their customary contempt for the people the Tories refused to believe that the electorate had rejected them or their policies. As always they attributed defeat to their policies not being presented with sufficient skill and energy. There was no question of examining policy. The party organisation was blamed and a scapegoat sought.

The replacement of Macmillan by Home was preceded by the appointment in the autumn of 1962 of Selwyn Lloyd to examine the liaison between the party in Parliament with the party headquarters and the constituency organisations. While Lloyd was preparing his report the crisis in the Tory ranks worsened and back bench M.P.s, panic stricken at the thought of the fate which would overtake them in a General Election, began to clamour for changes in the leadership.

Changing the 'Image'

Previously this kind of thing has only occurred after a Tory defeat at a General Election. When, for instance, they had been annihilated by the Liberals in 1906, they reorganised the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations (their local organisations) to make it more representative. Following the 1923 General Election when they lost many seats, and which led to the establishment of the first ever Labour Government, they adopted a new constitution and rules.

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Again, in 1929, they reacted to defeat at the polls by setting up a Sub-Committee to examine rules and organisation.

The biggest shake up in the Tory Party followed the 1945 General Election. The party Chairman, Ralph Assheton, was sacked and replaced by Lord Woolton, whilst Sir David Maxwell Fyfe was placed in charge of a Committee to examine the whole party organisation.

The Maxwell Fyfe Committee set out to change the "image' of the Conservative Party, to make it *look* more in keeping with the spirit and atmosphere of the post-war world. Some titled aristocrats who appeared as though they had been preserved in moth balls since mid-Victorian days were pushed a little into the background and great efforts made to attract the business executive and professional worker, the graduate of the red-brick university and the ex-grammar schoolboy and, above all, the trade unionist. Tory propaganda proclaimed that there was a place for all in the modernised Conservative party and that all had an equal chance to rise to the top of it, to be selected as a candidate, elected to Parliament and in due course to become a Cabinet Minister. In short, a British Conservative version of "from Log Cabin to White House".

"Change" became a much overworked word in official Tory literature. A group of Tory M.P.s produced a booklet with the title *Change is our Ally* and, in their current expensive pre-General Election campaign, the emphasis is very much on "modernisation".

It Pays to Advertise

It would have been enough to make the founding fathers of the Conservative Party turn in their graves if any of it had been true. But behind this new glossy front the Conservative Party remained unchanged. Its outlook and policies defended to the last ditch the interests of the ruling class at home and abroad, and the class composition of the party leadership and of its Parliamentary representation remained totally unchanged. Appearance was one thing, reality another. Sir Alexander Home may well be the ultimate reality.

That the Tories *have* succeeded in deceiving many electors is demonstrated by the results of the last three General Elections, although it would have been a different story had the right-wing leaders of the Labour Party not played into their hands.

The outcry against advertising practitioners who make false claims for their goods could well be directed against the propagandists of the Conservative Party. As it can only win an election by persuading millions to vote against their interests, the entire electoral history of the party is one of deceit. Those who might consider this too harsh or sweeping a judgment should compare the Conservatives' propaganda with their behaviour in Government and opposition. A good starting point would be Baldwin's unashamed admission that he had never any intention of adopting foreign policies based upon the principle of collective security but only promised to do so in 1935 because otherwise the Tories might have lost the General Election held that year. Or, take for instance the word of a former Conservative M.P. who wrote:

> "The Conservative Party has never made any serious pretence of being a party of principle ... it has always been frankly opportunist, and on the rare occasions when it has put out programmes of reform, almost as frankly cynical, putting them out in order to out-trump its opponents—to dish the Whigs as with Disraeli ... or as with Mr. Butler and more modern Tory reformers to steal the Socialist thunder."[1]

Origins of the Modern Conservative Party

The present form of Conservative organisation arises from the 1867 and 1884 extension of the franchise to virtually all male working class adults, and from the Prevention of Corruption and Illegal Practices Act of 1883. Its development has also, of course, been profoundly influenced by the growth of the mass media of communication in the past three-quarters of a century.

For most of the nineteenth century, Parliamentary elections were a simple if rather costly affair. Victory went to the candidate able to bribe and corrupt on the biggest scale. The Rotten Boroughs were abolished by the 1832 Reform Act but a large number of constituencies remained in the patronage of wealthy landlords and manufacturers whose influence and fortune was nearly always sufficient to guarantee victory for the candidate of their nomination, usually a close relative. The candidate did not need to know much about politics for it is related by Lord Randolph Churchill's biographer that in his first election contest the organisers were so "appalled at his ignorance of current political affairs" that at his initial meeting they placed friendly questioners in various parts of the hall with rehearsed questions to which the candidate had rehearsed replies.[2]

The 1867 Reform Act increased the number of elections only to 2,468,000 or 8.5 per cent of the population.[3] It made little change to the evil practices which had become almost a built-in

[1] Christopher Hollis, M.P. Devizes 1945-55, *The Conservative Party in History, Political Quarterly*, July-Sept. 1961.

[2] R. R. James, *Lord Randolph Churchill*, p. 43.

[3] Sir Ivor Jennings, *Party Politics*, Vol 1, *Appeal to the People*, p. 55.

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characteristic of British elections. Many constituencies remained in the gift of patrons, some were still pocket boroughs of wealthy men at the end of the century.[4]

Bribery and corruption were undiminished. Supplying a voter with more than sufficient liquid refreshment (alcoholic of course) was the surest way of obtaining his vote (Gladstone complained that in 1874 the Liberals had been swept away in a torrent of beer and gin). Every General Election was followed by petitions unseating M.P.s who, personally or through their campaign managers, were found guilty of illegal practices. Elections remained a very costly business. In the 1880 General Election the total expenditure of twenty-four Conservative candidates in five Midlands counties was £57,812, and in the two-member constituency of Leicester North with 6,849 electors the Tory campaign cost £6,306.[5] It would be necessary to multiply these figures six or eight times to translate them into current money values.

The 1884 Reform Act increased the electorate to 5.7 million or 16.4 per cent of the population.[6] The passing of the Prevention of Corruption Act did not signify that the party leaders had been converted to honesty in politics, for "even had the 1883 Act not been passed, it is probable that bribery and treating would have declined anyway as the electorate grew larger".[7] Henceforward more subtle methods had to be adopted. Deception was the order of the day. As we shall see the power of the purse was not diminished; it had to be exercised differently.

The writing had been on the wall for some time. In 1872 the first trades unionist M.P.s had been elected with Liberal support and the Earl of Derby had told an Edinburgh audience that the working man was "the master of the situation". His class can if it chooses outvote all other classes put together" (December 17, 1875).

The new situation called for strong local organisation and the voluntary worker was at a premium. This need gave a great impetus to the local Conservative associations organised in the National Union which, according to the official publication *Party Organisation* is one of the three elements which make up the Conservative Party, the others being the Parliamentary Party in both Houses of Parliament and the Conservative and Unionist Central Office.

[4] H. J. Hanham, *Politics and Party Management* (pp. 405-412), lists eighty-four constituencies which were in the gift of patrons between 1868 and 1885.

[5] C. O'Leary, *The Elimination of Corrupt Practices in British Elections*, p. 176.

[6] Jennings, op.cit., p. 58.

[7] William B. Gwyn, *Democracy: The Cost of Politics in Britain*, p. 92.

Conservative Party in Parliament

Little more than half a century ago, the Conservative benches in the House of Commons were filled by members of the great landed families. The Stanleys, Lowthers, Cecils, Sandwiches and Hamiltons rubbed shoulders in the division lobbies and bars in between dozing on the benches in the House. Although it dominates the Tory Party, big business, of course, has no scruples about using aristocrats to protect its profits.

The shift of power to the great industrial and financial interests was slow and incomplete. Not until after the First World War did the representatives of monopoly capitalism gain both numerical and political supremacy over the older school of Tory leaders and M.P.s who derived their power from land ownership and tradition.

In the inter-war Parliaments an average of 31.5 per cent of Tory M.P.s described themselves as company directors and 26.5 per cent as lawyers. A few were both company directors and lawyers, and more than half the Conservative M.P.s owned up to being one or both. The number of company directors was certainly higher because some Conservative M.P.s held directorships in addition to the profession they gave on their nomination papers and election material.[8]

The author of the most comprehensive study of the business connections of Tory M.P.s calculated that of the 420 Tory M.P.s in 1938, 181 held between them 775 directorships, many of them in the largest and most powerful corporations.[9]

The domination of the Parliamentary Party by rich men became a source of embarrassment to the party managers who were unable to conceal the preference of local Conservatives for the candidate able to pay his own election expenses and make a handsome annual contribution towards constituency funds. In High Peak (Derbyshire), "both Sir Samuel Hill-Wood, M.P. (1910-1929), and Sir Alfred Law, M.P. (1929-1939), paid the association's expenses as well as their own election expenses, and in general, the divisional agent had only to ask for money for it to be forthcoming."[10]

Ian Harvey, who represented Harrow East from 1950-59, wrote in 1939 a memorandum entitled *A Plutocratic System*, in which he said that the candidate unable to pay his election expenses and subscribe more than £100 a year to the constituency funds had *no* chance of being adopted, whilst one able to pay half his election expenses and subscribe £250 to £400 a year had a *reasonable* chance. To have an *excellent* chance

[8] J. F. S. Ross, *Parliamentary Representation*, p. 77.

[9] A. Haxey, *Tory M.P.*, p. 37.

[10] A. H. Birch, *Small Town Politics*, p. 46.

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it was necessary to be able and willing to pay all election expenses, i.e., anything up to £1,200, and subscribe £500 to £1,000 a year to constituency funds.[11]

In 1948 the Maxwell Fyfe Committee recommended that M.P.s and candidates be forbidden to pay all or the major part of their election expenses or contribute more than £50 a year towards constituency funds. We have no means of discovering how far this recommendation has been observed but in practice it is not much easier for men and women of modest means to find favour in the eyes of Conservative selection conferences, especially in constituencies which are likely to be won.

In the Parliament elected in 1955, seventy-eight Tories described themselves as company directors or executives, and seventy-seven as barristers or solicitors; in the 1959 Parliament the figures were

% of Tory M.P.s educated at:	All Parliaments between 1918 and 1935	Parliaments[15] 1945	1950	1951	1955	1959
All Public schools	78.5	85	85	82.5	75.5	72
Eton only	27.5	29	28	25	23	20
State maintained only	19	13.5	12.5	14.5	12.5	11.5
Oxford and Cambridge	39.5	47	52	52.5	53	50
Other Universities	10.5	12	10	13	10.5	9.5

eighty-eight and eighty-six respectively. Even taking the successful candidates' own description of themselves, 47 per cent of Tory M.P.s were company directors or lawyers.[12] There has been no post-war study of the business connections of Tory M.P.s comparable with that made by Haxey, but a Labour Research Department analysis showed that between them 129 of the 1955 Tory victors held, in 1954, 468 directorships, in addition 21 of the Cabinet Ministers had held 47 directorships (Ministers are compelled to resign directorships on taking office, but not sell shareholdings), making a total of 150 M.P.s holding 515 directorships.[13]

These figures most certainly do not give the full and complete picture. They exclude many holding leading positions in big business concerns. Moreover, changes in the organisation of big business are certain eventually to find a reflection inside the ranks of the Conservative Parliamentary Party, such as the growing number who have direct connections with advertising.

On the other side of the picture only one working man, Ray Mawby, the M.P. for Totnes, Devon, has been elected as a Tory to Parliament. Others have been chosen as candidates, but all in Labour-held constituencies.

Maxwell Fyfe or no Maxwell Fyfe, there is still truth in the comment made by one political writer shortly before the last General Election.

> "The Conservative Party would be as unhappy without its company directors as the company directors would be without the Conservative Party."[14]

Selecting the Select

Selection Committees, especially in Tory held constituencies, continue to prefer candidates educated at the "snob" public schools and the older universities to those coming from grammar schools and red brick universities. How little the educational background of Tory M.P.s has changed during the past half a century is shown by the following table:

The educational background of Tory Cabinet Ministers is even more heavily weighted in favour of the public schools and the older universities. Out of one hundred Tories who held Cabinet rank between 1918 and 1955, ninety-three were educated at a public school (thirty-two at Eton) and sixty-two went to Oxford or Cambridge, compared with eight only who attended other universities.[16] Eighteen of the twenty-one members of the Cabinet (September 1963) went to a public school (ten to Eton) and sixteen went to Oxford or Cambridge.

Public School or Oxford and Cambridge education can make all the difference to being selected as a candidate in any Tory seat which is at all likely to be won. In the two General Elections of 1955 and 1959, 56 per cent of the Tory candidates were successful; of those from public schools 69 per cent were elected (76 per cent of Old Etonian candidates); of those who went to Oxford or Cambridge 70 per cent were elected compared with only 39 per cent of the candidates who went to other universities. Starting your education at

[11] Reprinted as Appendix to J. F. S. Ross, op. cit.
[12] Extracted from Butler: *The British General Election of* 1955, p. 43; and Butler and Rose: *The British General Election of* 1959, p. 127.
[13] Labour Research Department, *Tory M.P.*
[14] *Political Quarterly*, July-Sept. 1959.
[15] Figures for elections held between 1918 and 1959 extracted from J. F. S. Ross *Elections and Electors*, Ch. 25, pp. 404-428; 1955 Butler, p. 42; 1959 Butler and Rose, p. 128.
[16] W T. Guttsman, *The British Political Elite*, p. 106.

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an elementary or secondary school was a handicap even if you later went to a public school or university, for only 37 per cent of the candidates whose education commenced at a humbler level were successful in securing election to Parliament.

The comment of an unsuccessful Tory candidate that "an attractive Old Etonian from a well-to-do local family starts with too big an advantage"[17] has been true throughout the history of the Tory Party and is likely to remain true within the foreseeable future.

Mr. Hollis was being over-generous when he wrote of his former parliamentary colleagues: "Things have changed but they have changed much less than one would have expected considering how much the world has changed."[18]

The 1922 Committee

All Conservative back benchers are automatically members of the Conservative Private Members' Committee, more frequently called the 1922 Committee because it originated from a committee of Tories elected for the first time at the General Election of 1922.

The 1922 Committee meets weekly while the House is sitting. It does not decide Tory policy, its decisions are merely conveyed to the party leader. Many of its members are spokesmen for the powerful pressure groups of the great industrial, financial and propertied interests acting as Parliamentary watchdogs of the separate vested interests.

The activities of the Committee seldom receive publicity. When they do it is usually because it has expressed some particularly outrageous ideas, even by the standards of Tory backwoodsmen.

Its chairman is Major Morrison, the member for Salisbury, a wealthy landowner whose private territory includes the Scottish island of Islay. He very rarely speaks in Parliament but has played some part in support of Macmillan in the recent conflict over the party's leadership.

The Conservative Constituency Associations

The National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations was formed at a gathering of representatives from fifty-five cities and towns in London in 1867. The chairman (John Gorst, M.P.) explained in his opening remarks that they were not meeting "for the discussion of Conservative principles, on which we are all agreed, it is only a meeting to consider by what particular organisation we may make these Conservative principles effective among the masses".[19]

Most of the Union's early efforts were directed towards the new working-class electors. Speakers at the annual conferences frequently emphasised the value of working men's clubs to hold the voters and suggested that the local associations be turned into clubs. Only the most suspicious minded would connect this enthusiasm for politically sponsored clubs with the fact that much of the evidence submitted to the Royal Commission which handled election petitions related to agents and organisers providing voters with lashings of free beer prior to and on polling day.

Not all Conservative leaders were appreciative of the Union's efforts and the Union considered it had come to stay when it was able to claim that in sixty-five of the seventy-four constituencies wrested wholly or partly from the Radicals in the 1874 election, there were constituency associations working actively in support of the Conservative candidate. The further extension of the franchise in 1883 together with the Prevention of Corrupt Practices Act put the local voluntary worker at a premium and settled all doubts as to the value of local organisation.

There is now a Conservative and Unionist Association in every constituency and often branches in wards and polling districts as well as organisations catering for women, young people and trades unionists. They have for the past several years claimed a membership of substantially more than two million. The author of a study of political organisations and activity in Glossop comments:

> ". . . the concept of membership (of the Conservative Party) is rather vague" and "it is difficult to know what interpretation to put on the Conservative claim to some 1,000 members, including club members, in Glossop. Certainly very few of them are active, and many are behindhand with their subscriptions."[20]

Annual Conference and the Leader

Judged by any normal standards the annual conference of the Conservative Associations is a peculiar affair. Each association is entitled to be represented by seven delegates (two men, two women, two young Conservatives and the Chairman of the Trade Union Council) as well as its agent and organiser. Usually about 4,000 delegates attend and it is more of a mass demonstration than a conference discussing and deciding policy. A Conservative candidate has said: "There is an

[17] W. Rees Mogg, *Political Quarterly*, July-Sept. 1959.
[18] C. Hollis, op. cit.
[19] Quoted R. T. McKenzie, *British Political Parties*, p. 151.
[20] A. H. Birch, op. cit., p. 50.

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almost social atmosphere about much of the proceedings."[21] In fact the Conference is little more than a great annual jamboree where the worthies from the localities rub shoulders with the mighty and dine out for months on the greetings and smiles bestowed on them by their leaders during those brief but glorious days.

The conference does not decide Tory policy. It discusses a few carefully chosen resolutions and its decisions are conveyed to the Leader (official Conservative literature always uses a capital letter) who makes his first appearance, after the conference has concluded its business, addressing a mass rally at which he lays down Conservative policy.

Few Conservatives question this procedure for:

> "It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that once the Conservative Annual Conference debates specific issues in fairly unambiguous language there will be an increasing tendency to expect the Government or leadership to implement conference decisions. Such a trend to 'brighter conferences' is at least questionable."[22]

Complaints are made from time to time that the leadership ignores even the limited conference decisions, and Selwyn Lloyd recommends the National Executive to consider the suggestion that the Leader of the Party's speech should be made before the opening of the conference, although he rejects suggestions that the size of the conference be reduced. However, it is very unlikely that any procedural change will take away from future Leaders the power to decide policy. They will no doubt continue to follow the precept of A. J. Balfour who said he would "as soon take advice from his valet as from a Conservative Annual Conference".

The anxiety of the Tory leadership to prevent the conference from having any say in policy is not due to fear of the delegates running riot and passing resolutions demanding the replacement of the monarchy and capitalism by a socialist republic. Conservative conferences are the haven of backwoodsmen who delight in letting off steam against council tenants, strikers, working class youth who buy pop records, and colonial people who have rejected the British Raj. At Llandudno in 1962 Angus Maude, M.P., said: "There are on this agenda twenty-one resolutions relating to young people—nine in favour of making it easier for them to buy their own homes and seven in favour of flogging them."[23] Let it be said that the backwoodsmen are not all male, for the Tory women often appear bent on demonstrating that what Kipling wrote about "the female of the species" is as applicable to the suburban and small town Conservative associations as the mountains of the North West frontier.

The backwoodsmen (and women) express the real Tory outlook. But the leaders know that it would be electoral disaster to go to the country on the policies they would adopt were they given a free hand. So the Leader has to perform the task of laying down a policy palatable to the backwoodsmen and capable of deceiving the electorate.

In the Constituencies

The constituency associations are a frequent source of embarrassment to the leadership's efforts to present the party in a better light. A notorious case was the political attack on Mr. Nigel Nicholson carried out by the Bournemouth East and Christchurch Tories at the end of 1956. Mr. Nicholson who had represented the constituency in Parliament since 1952 was unable to stomach the Suez adventure and therefore reacted by sitting in the House of Commons Library reading *The Illustrated London News* when he was supposed to be marching into the Government lobby following the Parliamentary debate on the motion of confidence in the Government.

Bournemouth Tories appear to have little patience for men with consciences. A campaign little short of sheer political gangsterism was organised to get rid of Mr. Nicholson. It was led by ex-colonial army officers, who proved more successful at putting down rebellion in the Tory ranks than in India or Africa.

Selecting the Parliamentary candidate has been the Associations' main sphere of influence. The choices have not helped to fulfil the Maxwell Fyfe Committee's recommendation that the Parliamentary party be more representative. Their preference for male candidates of aristocratic or wealthy origin, educated at one of the major public schools and older universities and belonging to the Church of England, is unshaken if not unshakeable. Selwyn Lloyd expresses the hope that Constituency selection bodies will take into account

> ". . . that those selected should not only be able to represent the local interests of their Constituencies but also should have a contribution to make to national politics. . . . I also hope that they will ensure that to a greater extent than up to now among those attending for final interview one of the women applicants and one of the Trade Unionist applicants are included."[24]

The Tories have always loved titles. Between

[21] W. J. Biffen, *Conservative Conference and Conservative Policy; Political Quarterly*, July-Sept. 1961.
[22] Biffen, ibid.
[23] 1962 *Annual Conference Report*, p. 122.
[24] Selwyn Lloyd Report, p. 17.

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1868 and 1914 no commoner held the post of President of the National Union and up until 1954 the position was held by 6 dukes, 7 marquesses, 17 earls, 2 viscounts, 19 barons, 1 baronet, 2 knights and 8 commoners, of whom 5 were M.P.s. In the same period the chairmanship of the National Union was held by 1 duke, 1 marquis, 3 earls, 2 viscounts, 5 barons, 12 baronets, 12 knights, 1 countess and 30 commoners, including 14 M.P.s.

The Conservative Central Office

The Conservative Central Office, which was founded by Disraeli in 1870, is regarded as the "civil service" of the party. It is, in theory, very much the machine of the Leader:

> "It is charged by the Leader of the Party with the responsibility of seeing that the organisation throughout the country is efficient, making known the policy of the party, and conveying to him from time to time the feeling in the constituencies. . . . The role of the Central Office is to guide, inspire and co-ordinate the work of the Party throughout the country, to advise and assist area councils."[25]

Its officers, who are appointed by the Leader, are the Chairman, who automatically becomes chairman of the party organisation, vice-chairman and two honorary treasurers. Through these officers, who sit on the Central Council, Executive Committee and General Purposes Committee of the National Union, the Leader of the Party is able to exercise control over the whole organisation.

The most important committees in the Conservative Party organisation are controlled by the officials appointed by the Leader, and do not appear to be in any way answerable to the National Union for their actions. The ad hoc Liaison Committee between the Cabinet and Party which between 1957 and 1959 was the "only committee which had effective power and which met regularly to exercise it"[26] was composed entirely of appointees of the Leader and Chairman.

The Advisory Committee on policy consists of seventeen members, a chairman and deputy chairman, both appointed by the Leader, five members chosen by the 1922 Committee, two by the Tory peers and eight selected by the National Union's Executive Committee. This committee works closely with the Conservative Research Department, whose chairman is also an appointee of the Leader.

All matters dealing with the selection of Conservative candidates are the responsibility of the deputy or vice-chairman. There is a Standing Advisory Committee on Candidates, whose "purpose is to assess on broadest grounds the suitability of men and women who wish to become approved candidates for Parliament". The Chairman of the Party Organisation, as well as the vice-chairman, are members of this committee, which does not have to report to the Executive Committee of the National Union.

Finance is in the hands of the two honorary treasurers who are assisted by the Consultative Committee on Party Finance, of which the Chairman of the Party Organisation is ex-officio chairman and the honorary treasurers who are deputy chairmen. There is also a Central Board of Finance whose task is "to raise for the Party money which would not normally be obtained by or go to the constituencies".[27] It is responsible to the Chairman of the Party Organisation.

The departments of the Central Office (organisation and finance; publicity and propaganda; local government; industrial and Young Conservatives) run parallel to a series of committees of the National Union. The heads of the Central Office departments attend all meetings of their corresponding advisory committee of the National Union and make a report on the work of their department, but they are responsible *only* to the Party Chairman, who is, in turn, responsible *only* to the Leader. None of the Advisory Committees has any executive power nor do they play any significant role in the transmission of Conservative policy to either the party members or the electorate. They are too large and unwieldy and meet too infrequently to be in any way effective, their main purpose appears to be to give the mass membership organised in the constituency associations the illusion of playing a part in the direction of the party's affairs. *Perhaps the most important single proof of the dominance of the Central Office over the National Union is that it has control of the party's election funds.*

R. T. McKenzie has said of the control of Conservative Party affairs by the Central Office:

> "It would be difficult to envisage a more tight knit system of oligarchical control of the affairs of a political party. The three most vital functions of the work of a party are not in any way controlled by the mass organisation; each is controlled by one or another of a small band of people all of whom are the personal appointees of the Leader of the Party. Even in other less important fields . . . the function of the various advisory committees of the National Union

[25] *Party Organisation*, p. 13.

[26] D. Hennessy, *The Communication of Conservative Policy, Political Quarterly*, July-Sept. 1961.

[27] *Party Organisation*, p. 11.

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involve no executive responsibilities. In every instance such responsibilities are retained by the Central Office.

"The evils (if they were evils) which Lord Randolph Churchill thought he saw in the control of the affairs of the Party by a parliamentary clique are as real now as they were in the 1880's."[28]

The speaker at the 1929 Party conference who said that the Chairman of the Party "had more power vested in him than a Tammany Hall boss" hit the nail on the head.

The Leader of the Party

Every objective study of the Conservative Party notes the extraordinary powers of the Leader. He lays down policy, appoints the Chief Whip of the Parliamentary Party and his deputies, and the chief officer and controllers of the Party organisation. When the Tories are in office he appoints the Ministers and, in opposition, he chooses the shadow Cabinet.

It is, therefore, appropriate to consider how this high office is attained. Straight away it is necessary to say that the process of choosing a Tory leader has not the remotest connection with any known democratic procedure. As the back-bench M.P. Captain Prettyman, who moved the resolution inviting Austen Chamberlain to become the leader in 1921, declared:

"Great leaders of parties are not elected. . . . I think it will be a bad day (when we) have solemnly to meet to elect a leader. The leader is there, and we all know it when he is there."

If the leadership falls vacant while the party is in office the reigning monarch, after consultation with a small group of top drawer members of the ruling class Establishment, sends for that Tory leader whom they consider best able to form the strongest government (which is, of course, not necessarily the same as the one enjoying the most support among Tory M.P.s or voters), and bestows on him the office of Prime Minister. This is followed by a meeting of Conservative M.P.s, peers, parliamentary candidates, and the Executive Committee of the National Union which automatically elects the monarch's choice of Leader of the Party.

This prosaic description of Tory practice in no way shows the skullduggery which characterises struggles for leadership. When Macmillan was ready to bow out, the new Leader was not "there". The Tories were hopelessly divided on the issue of who was best fitted to defend rent, interest and profit and more immediately win the next General Election. The battle for succession was not conducted in accordance with Queensberry nor indeed any other recognisable set of rules. The eventual victor was announced to the reigning monarch from his hospital bed by a politically and physically sick Prime Minister. He was not the choice of any section of the electorate, the members of the Conservative Party, the Tory M.P.s, and peers, nor of the Cabinet. But he was the chosen of the most powerful industrialists, financiers and men of property, the men whose names rarely figure in the press outside the financial columns, but who wield the reins of power within the Conservative Party.

Disraeli died in 1881 when the Conservative Party was in opposition and the leadership of the party was left in abeyance, Lord Salisbury becoming Leader of the party in the Lords and Sir Stafford Northcote in the Commons. When the Tories won the 1885 General Election, Lord Salisbury had so far established his dominance that he became Leader as a matter of course.

In 1902 on Salisbury's resignation as Prime Minister,

"few thought it unreasonable that his nephew, Arthur Balfour, should succeed any more indeed than a few years ago it was thought unreasonable that the present Lord Salisbury should have almost the nomination of a new Prime Minister (Macmillan) and should nominate his connection by marriage."[29]

Balfour resigned in 1911 after leading the party to three successive electoral defeats. The two most obvious candidates for succession were Walter Long, a representative of rural England and the older aristocratic school of Conservatives, and Sir Austen Chamberlain, representative of the growing industrial elements within the party. Between these two there was bitter political and personal antagonism. Efforts to persuade either to withdraw in favour of the other were fruitless. When a contested election for the leadership seemed likely, Bonar Law, a Canadian born Glasgow iron master who hitherto had attained little fame, decided to let his name go forward, not in the anticipation of winning but with an eye to staking a claim for the leadership on some future occasion.

Law's biographer[30] gives a fascinating account of the backstairs intrigue conducted during the days preceding the vital meeting of Tory M.P.s and members of the House of Lords. As dismay mounted at the prospect of a contested election for the leadership, Law's backers led by Lord Beaverbrook (then Max Aitken, a Tory M.P.),

[28] McKenzie, op. cit., p. 291.

[29] C. Hollis, op. cit.

[30] Robert Blake: *The Unknown Prime Minister*, Ch. 4, pp. 71-86.

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manoeuvred to persuade both Long and Chamberlain to withdraw in the interests of preserving party unity. In this they succeeded and when the Tories met at the Carlton Club at noon on November 13th, 1911, Law was elected unopposed and the meeting finished in good time for the M.P.s to disperse for an early lunch. Blake comments:

> "Not since the days of Disraeli had so strange a choice been made; and certainly no choice more strange has been made since."[31]

Law gave up the leadership to Austen Chamberlain through ill health in 1921, but was recalled to become Prime Minister when Lloyd George's Coalition Government fell eighteen months later.

Unnatural Selection

The natural successor appeared to be Lord Curzon, the deputy Prime Minister and formerly a Viceroy of India. However, by now many ruling class and court circles had concluded that the country would not stomach a Prime Minister who did not sit in the House of Commons and Curzon was passed over. King George V sent for the comparatively little known Stanley Baldwin to confer on him the office of Prime Minister. A few days later Baldwin was unanimously elected Leader of the party by the M.P.s and peers. The same process occurred when Baldwin retired in 1937 to be replaced as Prime Minister and Leader of the party by Neville Chamberlain, who was the idol of Cliveden at a time when this stately home enjoyed a reputation that was mainly political.

There was a minor variation in 1940 after Chamberlain's resignation. Churchill became Prime Minister but Chamberlain remained Leader of the party until his death a few months later. Churchill was then elected Leader as a matter of course. In 1955, when Churchill resigned, things pursued their normal course; the Queen made Eden Prime Minister and he was subsequently elected the Leader of the Tory Party.

In 1957, after the Suez disaster, Eden resigned to be followed by Macmillan in circumstances described thus by *The Times* Political Correspondent (2.7.63):

> "It has emerged since that on that occasion Lord Salisbury (with Sir Winston Churchill advising the Queen) played a central part. One reliable account is that he summoned to 10 Downing Street the Whips from Lords and Commons and other rank and file representatives, six in all, and put two names in front of them—Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Butler. The six pronounced for Mr. Macmillan having already collected party opinion, and Lord Salisbury on that basis proffered advice to the Queen. Mr. Macmillan was summoned to the Palace."[32]

It is perfectly clear from this very brief résumé of the process of choosing Tory leaders that the aim is not to appoint a Leader supported by the majority of electors, Tory voters, or even Tory M.P.s and peers, but to choose the one who in the opinion of all those leading circles which could be grouped under the heading "The Establishment" is best fitted to carry on the Government in the interests of the ruling class.

Perhaps the oddest sidelight on the whole business of choosing Tory leaders is the consternation which developed in the ranks in 1911 when it looked as though there would be an election, not with two candidates, but with three.

> "How was the final vote to be taken? Would it be on the basis of a simple majority, i.e., victory to whichever got most votes on the first ballot? Or would there be a second ballot in which all but the top would have been eliminated?"[33]

Money—Where do they Get it?

Money has always been treated mysteriously by the Tories. The General Director of the Conservative Central Office wrote defending the party's non-publication of accounts:

> "The idea of publishing the accounts of political parties is superficially attractive. It arises from the instinctive curiosity about other people's affairs which we all share . . . the publication of comparative figures . . . would be completely misleading. There can be no standard form of comparison owing to the fundamental differences in the composition and functions of the different party organisations and their relations with quasi-political bodies."[34]

The only thing we know for sure about the Tories and money is that they use a lot of it. We have already quoted figures of the expenditure of the Tories at elections in the nineteenth century. Now that election expenditure is limited by law the bulk of Tory expenditure is incurred between elections. How much, we do not know and they have not always been certain themselves, for in 1911 Sir Arthur Steel Maitland, the Chairman of the Party, wrote to the newly elected Leader Bonar Law, complaining that the Central Office "could not tell you within £10,000 what the year's expenditure had been, probably not within £20,000."[35]

At the 1959 General Election the total expen-

[31] Quoted Blake, op. cit., p. 86.

[32] Quoted McKenzie, op. cit., p. 182.
[33] ibid., p. 79.
[34] Quoted McKenzie, op. cit., p. 100.
[35] Quoted Blake, op. cit., p. 100.

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diture of all Tory candidates was £475,915, but they spent about as much as this on a national pre-election poster campaign and the various estimates being made of the costs of their current campaign suggest that the figure will be little less than half a million pounds.

Apart from propaganda before elections there is the cost of maintaining the Tory organisation. The paid staff of the Conservative Party in in England and Wales was recently described as:[36]

	Administrative	Clerical
General Headquarters	39	86
Agents		
National Office	9	12
Regional	60	60
Constituencies	520	?
Research	25	17
Publicity	24 (plus paid part-time staff)	

Eight hundred and eighty paid officers in England and Wales apart from clerical workers in the constituencies, assistants to the agents and paid collectors, demand a large quantity of money for upkeep. Bear in mind that, in 1954, the Central Office declared that to maintain an efficient organisation a constituency party needed between £3,000 and £4,000 a year. It is certainly no exaggeration to say that the annual cost of maintaining the Conservative Party organisation is several million pounds.

Where does it come from? Through the ages the Tories have defiantly refused to answer this question. In the 1880's Lord Randolph Churchill was attacking the secret funds at the disposal of the Tory leadership as a source of corruption.

Tory M.P.s and candidates always paid heavily until the Maxwell Fyfe committee proposed a limitation on their contributions. In the nineteenth century the cost of being a candidate averaged £500 a year in borough constituencies and at least £1,100 in the counties. Judging from Mr. Harvey's memorandum it would have cost little less in 1959.

In 1912 Steel Maitland wrote to Bonar Law:

> "We ought to have £100,000 a year at least. Towards this Lord Farquhar and I have at present got about £30,000 a year more, mostly in a few big subscriptions. I am at present organising with him systematic collections from (1) peers, (2) the City. . . . I hope by the end say of 1913 to have an income of £120,000 to £140,000 a year. This should be to a large extent but not wholly, irrespective of future honours."[37]

Honours could fetch even larger sums. W. W. Astor, made a Baron in 1917, gave the Party Treasurer £200,000.

In 1926 (the year of the General Strike) Baldwin made an appeal to big business: "We need funds and I look to the City of London to give a lead in providing that support which, as businessmen, they should be prepared to give, in view of our efforts to make their business safe."[38] Twenty-one years later Lord Woolton was appealing for £1 million.

Tory leaders' claims that a large part of their funds are derived from small contributions are certainly exaggerated and the evidence available suggests rather that the members

> "are not willing to give the party the help, financial and otherwise, that it now needs from its supporters, and, their attitude seems to be that if the present leaders are not wealthy and powerful enough to run the party in the way the Woods did, so much the worse for the present leaders."[39]

That this outlook is widespread is indicated by Selwyn Lloyd's plea: "The attitude of individual Conservatives to their financial support of the Party must change."[40]

A journalist has described Lloyd's plaint that the subscription of 2s. 6d. a year was "unrealistic" as:

> "an understatement which would imply ruin for Conservatism if members' subscriptions were its only source of income. It is the other sources, the secret ones, which make up the difference and keep the party in the black. They are collected in London by the Central Board of Finance. The board and the party treasurers refuse to tell even the Prime Minister how much money comes from where."[41]

There are good grounds for believing that a considerable amount of Conservative Party money comes from industry via organisations of middlemen which disburse receipts to organisations engaged in fighting for free enterprise. Shareholders are less fortunate than trade unionists in one respect; they are not told whether their money is being spent for political purposes, nor can they "contract out".

[36] R. Rose, *New Society*, 8.8.63.

[37] Quoted Blake, op. cit., p. 100. Blake adds that Law gave a cool reception to suggestions that the party pledge itself not to give honours in return for financial benefits.

[38] Quoted McKenzie, op. cit., p. 594.

[39] Birch, p. 51.

[40] Selwyn Lloyd Report, p. 5.

[41] *Observer* (9.6.63).

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Money is a great weapon in British political life, and the apparently unlimited sources of supply available to the Tories gives them a tremendous advantage over other parties, and especially over the Communist Party. Their determination to conceal the main sources of funds is of course very much a part of the deception they practise about their real aims. The Tories may deceive sections of the masses into voting for them, but they are less successful in persuading them to pay for the privilege of Tory rule.

Organised Deception

Because it is easy to ridicule the Tory Party there can be a danger of underestimating its power and danger. If some Tory leaders look even more ludicrous on television than the impersonations of them in TWTWTW, or if the hats worn by the delegates to the Annual Conference of Conservative Women are always good for a laugh, this sometimes helps to conceal the real character of the Conservative Party.

However much it pretends to be the "Gentleman's party imbued with 'fair play' ", we should never forget that it is the party of which the foremost authority of the day on Parliamentary matters wrote:

> "History has shown that Conservative Oppositions for nearly a century have been the most intransigent and effective and, in popular phrase, the dirtiest Opposition that the British Parliamentary system has seen . . . and with such a leader as Mr. Bonar Law (assisted by very able lieutenants) opposition has degenerated from a gentlemanly swearing match to a public house brawl."[42]

The thoroughly undemocratic character of the Conservative Party is no accident. The old Tory Party was completely controlled by a small group of wealthy aristocrats and its policies were decided in country houses and London clubs. When the ruling class was no longer able to resist the working-class demands for the vote, they directed their efforts towards ensuring that the extended franchise should not be used to interfere with their own class power and privileges. The wiles and cunning which had enabled them to dominate one-quarter of the world were brought into play to rob the working class of the fruits of their struggle for democratic advance.

The Conservative Party is a political machine which plays a central part in the maintenance of their class power. Its essential function is to persuade millions to vote against their own interests, and even the ideas which they hold. This is achieved by such methods as "red letter" scares (the 1924 election), a promise to keep Britain on the Gold Standard followed immediately by going off it (1931), undying faithfulness to collective security (1935), attempts to make the flesh creep with tales of an Attlee administered Gestapo (1945), whose finger on the trigger (1951), and to crown it all, "you've never had it so good" (1959). If "party is organised political opinion", then we can only define the Conservative Party as "organised political deception".

A party whose political purpose is fundamentally opposed to the real interests of its own rank and file cannot afford democracy. If the mass membership of the Conservative Party had any semblance of power there would be an ever present danger of those drawn from the middle classes and backward sections of the working class coming into conflict with the leadership. In the Labour Party the constitution does provide the affiliated organisations with the possibility of deciding policy and defeating the right-wing leadership. Within the Conservative Party no such possibility exists. Absolute power rests in the hands of the leadership.

From time to time there are rumblings of discontent such as the 1929 Conference when a speaker described the party as an "autocracy masquerading as a democracy".[43] Discontent has however always been dealt with swiftly and without much difficulty by a leadership which rarely bothers to conceal its utter contempt for a rank and file so easily bribed by promises which will never be fulfilled and appeals to its worst instincts of selfishness and snobbery.

The reason for existence of the Tory Party is to prevent the full flowering and development of democratic life. The struggle to smash the political power of monopoly capitalism is at the same time a struggle to defeat its political instrument, the Conservative Party. With thousands of voters deserting the Tories at elections the possibility of undermining the Conservative Party's mass basis is stronger than for many a long day, and what would remain of the party if it lost its mass base among the middle class and the more backward workers? Disillusionment with the Tories however is not enough to win this struggle. What is needed is the unity of the overwhelming majority of the British people in support of the policies and perspectives which the Communist Party has outlined in its programme *The British Road to Socialism* and at its Twenty-Eighth National Congress.

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[42] Sir Ivor Jennings: *Parliament*, p. 180.

[43] Quoted McKenzie, p. 181.

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Georg Lukacs and the Historical Novel

Stanley Mitchell

THE recent publication of Georg Lukács's *The Historical Novel*[1] and *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* has been welcomed by Marxists and non-Marxists alike. I shall confine myself here to the first work.

Let me start with the impact of *The Historical Novel* on non-Marxists. I shall then proceed to an exposition of the book and conclude with some criticism.

The Impact

Two things have excited reviewers: Lukács's insistence on the public character of art and his fearless engagement with the fundamental problems of literary creation (for the scope of his study, as we shall see, goes well beyond its title). *"The Historical Novel,"* writes *The Times Literary Supplement*, "bursts like a stout warrior from another planet on to our all too introspective literary-critical scene." Donald Davie, the author of a book on Scott, finds an ally in Lukács (*The Guardian*). To the sociological charge of Leslie Fiedler that the novel of Scott was "invented to satisfy the emotional needs of a Tory squirearchy consumed by nostalgia", Davie responds with the Marxist sociology of Lukács: "Scott's Toryism did not insulate him from his people, or from what moved and fermented in them, any more than Flaubert's hatred of the bourgeois could inoculate him against the virus of bourgeois society in decay" (Davie). In fact he uses Lukács to protect early bourgeois literature from the sophistications of later bourgeois critics. To Lawrence's insinuation of a "monstrous perversion of sex-relations" in Fenimore Cooper, he replies: "Lukács, I think, would ask in return what this has to do with Cooper's epic subject, 'the enormous historical tragedy of those early colonisers who emigrated from England in order to preserve their freedom, but who themselves destroy this freedom by their own deeds in America'."

Davie concludes:

> "In the perspective of this book the novels and poems we write, and those we most admire from our past, are typically products of the boudoir, the parlour, and the bedroom; Lukács envisages novels which shall comprehend also market place and tavern, barracks and battlefield. One does not have to be Communist or fellow-traveller to feel sure that he is right."

Lukács, whom Thomas Mann called a "mediator between the spheres and the ages", could not have wished for a warmer and more positive response from a bourgeois critic.

Scott's Innovations

The Historical Novel falls into two parts: a literary history and, digressing from it, a theoretical enquiry into the nature of epic and drama [which excited Raymond Williams (*The Listener*) more than anything else in the book]. Let me begin with the literary history. It traces an odyssey which has not yet reached home. But like the large episode on epic and drama its journey is theoretical rather than comprehensive or specific. What interests Lukács is how a sense of history, which emerged for the first time after the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, impinged upon literature.

The journey begins with Scott who gave this historical sense its "classical form". Scott, Lukács argues, was the first writer to portray men *historically*, that is to endow them with the specific psychology and manners of their age. History in the novel before Scott had adorned the characters like so much costumery; the man beneath remained unhistorical and static. What gave Scott his sense of history was the millionfold irruption of the Revolutionary Wars into the lives of ordinary people, destroying the old professional armies, dragooning entire populations into the conflict, inflaming national sentiment, sending conscripts from one end of Europe to another. The Enlighteners, paving the way for the Revolution psychologically and ideologically, had preached a rational reform of men's affairs, conceived of progress as a peaceful, upward movement once a rational state had been brought into being. The actual Revolution shivered their prophecies. Reason and Harmony were soon to be submerged under the fresh volcanoes of commerce and industry.

[1] Georg Lukács—*The Historical Novel*, Merlin Press, 36s.

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There were two ways, according to Lukács, in which thinkers could regard the consequences of the Revolution. The first was to lament the chaos, the degradation, the collapse of ideals, to seek refuge in an imagined organic past, free of the anarchy which the Revolution had loosed—in other words, Romanticism (which all too often went hand in hand with Restorationist politics). The other was to accept the tragedy of the period, to raise the idea of progress through its negation to a new level. This Hegel achieved in his philosophy and Scott in his historical novel (that Scott may never have heard of Hegel is immaterial). In their different ways they were both expressing the idea of a contradictory progress, of historical movement through the clash of opposing classes, nations, groups.

England at this time was particularly suited to such an outlook. While France still struggled in post-revolutionary throes, politically throttled but economically turbulent, England had made its bourgeois revolution some time back, had achieved some stability, seemed to show that progress was possible as the peaceful resultant of very bloody civil strife. The "Glorious Revolution" formed the ideological starting-point of Tories like Scott. Critics of capitalist industrialism, they yet accepted the new age in the spirit of the post-Cromwellian compromise. In his writing Scott avoids the present and its sharpening class struggles, preferring to trace the "middle way" in British history which culminated in the "Glorious Revolution". But he faithfully portrays the bitter extremes on each side of this path.

He embodies his own search for a "middle way" in a hero of moderate convictions and ties who is thereby enabled to come into contact now with one, now with the other of any two contending sides. In this way, argues Lukács, the central class struggles of an epoch are translated into immediate, personal terms. The important historical protagonists, the kings, queens, generals do not hold the centre of the scene (as in the historical novel of the Romantics); they appear episodically against a background of popular life. To achieve a personal ambition they must answer the needs of a clan or a nation. But should they step beyond these needs their most selfless supporters will desert them (cf. *A Legend of Montrose*). Scott never shows us the personal development of his historical figures because, argues Lukács, it is history, not their private lives which determines their role. Later, Lukács trounces the *belletrist* biographical novel of modern times which seeks a man's greatness solely in the mysteries of his personal psychology, treating history as a more or less appropriate *décor* (André Maurois, Stefan Zweig).

Realism to Naturalism

We pass from Scott to his inheritors: Fenimore Cooper, Balzac, Manzoni, Pushkin. Lukács is interesting on all these and lets us hear the peculiar national resonances of their historical novels. But the most important transition is from Scott to Balzac who takes history into the present. We arrive at one of Lukács's central principles: That there is no essential difference between the historical and the contemporary social novel. They are both ways of seeing society historically, the first searching out the preconditions of the present, the second showing the present as a temporary halt between past and future. When the historical novel becomes a "special genre", it ceases to be truly historical. This happens after 1848.

In the July Revolution the proletariat appears for the first time in history as an armed, revolutionary class, while the bourgeoisie which had emblazoned Liberty, Fraternity, Equality over Europe falls on the defensive. A bourgeois writer forfeits the sense of belonging to a progressive class. He becomes, like Flaubert, a contemptuous observer of society. If he writes historical novels it is not to find the link between past and present, but to conjure up all the excessive, grotesque, grandiose, fever-bright moments of history in an act of artistic vengeance on his own day. The authentic detail lavished on this enterprise nevertheless masks a psychological modernisation: Flaubert's Salammbô for instance is any hysterical, middle-class, city-bred girl of the present. The bourgeois writer, divorced from his own class and the people, loses the ability to think historically. We are in the era of Naturalism. The writer records with dispassionate expertise the surface phenomena of life, but is unable because of his social position to grasp the deeper movements beneath. In Flaubert and Zola the passion, the hatred for their class give their work dignity and stature, yet cannot overcome this deleterious isolation. But such emotions are engendered by a contemporary theme, by a tussle with the writer's own world. In a novel like *Salammbô*, dealing with remote Carthage, there is nothing to evoke a similar commitment. "Exoticism" holds sway.

History had served as a moral reservoir for the original Romantics, feeding their resentment against the present. Now both morality and meaning were abdicating and an aesthetic irrationalism taking their place. The "historical novel" was born as a falsely "special genre" in its own right. Its world was a decorative chaos peopled by lonely geniuses and senseless mobs (e.g. in the work of the Swiss Conrad Ferdinand Meyer).

Naturalism proved as harmful to the "plebeian"

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writers who identified themselves with the people (de Costa, Erckmann-Chatrian). For each European nation was irrevocably divided into two. Earlier bourgeois writers, however conservative in their views (like Scott), had yet not lost touch with popular traditions. Writers after 1848 were forced into two antithetical camps. Not until the Socialist movement had matured could radical writers once again take the whole of society into their purview, the ruling classes as well as the ruled. The progressive naturalists tended, from the most democratic of motives, to exclude or blacken the great man (e.g. Thackeray's treatment of the Duke of Marlborough in *Henry Esmond,* who is seen not in broad historical terms, but in satirical close-up by the memoirist narrator). Here was a falling-off from the realist tradition of Scott who could include the great man without pretending that he alone was responsible for history. Lukács likens Realism to Lenin's dictum on political class consciousness:

> "Political class consciousness can only be brought to the worker from outside, i.e. outside the economic struggle, outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The domain from which this knowledge can alone be drawn is that of the relations of all classes and strata to the state and government, the domain of mutual relations between *all classes.*"

Naturalism remains at the level of the "economic struggle". Russia escaped Naturalism because of her dual development, more backward economically and socially than Western Europe, yet moving into a pre-revolutionary phase once the abolition of serfdom had released the brakes on the development of capitalism. The great historical novelist of Russia is, of course, Tolstoy, who in principle carried on Scott's tradition by making his historical hero, Kutuzov, simply the executor of the people's will. Yet he shares with the radical Naturalists a distrust for active leaders (e.g. Peter the Great, Napoleon) which stems from his religious, peasant orientation. On the other hand his main characters are noblemen whose personal lives echo and interweave with the lives of the people.

Our journey rounds its cape with imperialism and the first Socialist revolution in Russia. Lukács confines his attention to the "democratic humanist" writers (Heinrich Mann, Romain Rolland, Lion Feuchtwanger). He does not deal with the Soviet historical novel because, he says, of his insufficient knowledge of Russian and the scanty material that was available in translation at the time of writing. (He wrote the book in German during 1936-7 after four years as a political exile in Russia; it was first published in Russian.)

It is not important, Lukács urges, that the "democratic humanists" are not Marxists. What is important is the perspective their period offers. The post-1848 and pre-imperialist period in Western Europe showed no way forward to bourgeois writers; and the radicals, disabled from apprehending society as a whole, could impart no historical sense to the present. Now, the struggle against imperialism, embodied at its finest in the Popular Front, and the emerging Socialism of the Soviet Union open up a new perspective which can restore a sense of history to all democratic writers.

The Future

But the odyssey of the historical novel is not yet complete. For the chief characteristic of the "democratic humanists" is to weave their stories round the great humanist figures of the past and to leave the people a shadowy, passive or irresponsible mass in the background, either the beneficiaries or the blind opponents of their enlightened leaders. The "democratic humanists" therefore write *for* rather than *from* the people, unlike the so much more conservative and less ideological Scott. Similarly, they ignore Scott's historical novel and extend the biographical form of the naturalists to which they impart a positive content. In countering the irrational historical attitudes of their predecessors they return to the Enlightenment whose traditions had been so cynically trampled on during the decline of the bourgeoisie after 1848. But they inherit all the weaknesses of the Enlightenment, its reliance on enlightened leadership, its own irrational rationalism of supposing that history could be controlled from above, its illuminist condescension to the "dark" masses. The failing of the "democratic humanist" historical novel lay in its psychological and didactic approach to history. It had yet to recover the Realism of Scott.

Lukács's study ends here. He hoped that a close involvement with the Popular Front would deepen the popular elements in the novels of the "democratic humanists". The collapse of the Popular Front and the tragic end of the Spanish Civil War dashed his hopes. But, he writes in his new preface, since his study was concerned with principles rather than literary history in the narrow sense he has allowed it to stand. He mentions Lampedusa's *The Leopard* as a recent historical novel which confirms the principles he arrived at in 1937. The task of the historical novelist remains then the same as he stated it at the end of his study: to eliminate the harmful legacy of the naturalists and return to Scott on a higher level, to effect a "negation of a negation" (p. 350):

> "The classical historical novel portrayed the contradictions of human progress, and with the

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means of history defended progress against the ideological attacks of reaction; in this struggle it depicted the necessary destruction of the old, primitive democracy and the great heroic crises of human history. But its historical perspective could only be that of the *necessary decline of the heroic period,* the necessary march of development into *capitalist prose.* The classical historical novel portrays the *sunset* of the heroic-revolutionary development of bourgeois democracy.

"Today's historical novel has arisen and is developing amid the *dawn* of a *new* democracy." (p. 344).

In the modern novel it is Scott perhaps who comes nearest to the old epic. In the further development of the historical novel we can look forward to the flowering of a new epic.

Drama, Epic and Novel

From this brief exposition, which does bare justice to the richness of ideas garnered in by Lukács, one sees that his central concern is with "popular spirit"—the untranslatable German *Volkstümlichkeit.* The same concern animates his theoretical enquiry into the nature of epic and drama. The enquiry is made necessary by a curious and paradoxical-seeming fact. If the historical consciousness which gave rise to the historical novel came only with the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, how is it that a genuine historical drama could have been produced three centuries earlier by Shakespeare and his contemporaries? Lukács seeks his answer in the different function of epic and drama. Drama portrays the great collisions of society, epic their growth and aftermath.

It is no accident, Lukács argues, that the great periods of drama are located at the major turning-points in human history: the breakthrough from gentile to class society in the case of the Greeks, the transition from feudalism to the last class society in the case of the Elizabethans. In addition, both societies, ancient Athens and Renaissance England, were relatively homogenous communities. This is an essential precondition of drama, for a dramatic character must embody *directly* a decisive trend of his age; there can be no complex ravelling of threads between him and all the social circumstances which have formed him and link him with countless other people. There is no time for this. The drama deals with characters alone, at most with props, but never with a broad array of social circumstances. This is the province of epic, in modern times of the novel. To intrude the method of the novel upon the drama is to blunt the conflicts with which drama is so exclusively concerned.

From this position Lukacs attacks the biographical novel which places the historical hero at the centre. This, too, unlawfully mixes the genres. To make the novel revolve round the historical protagonist is to exaggerate his role in history, to explain it in personal terms, to diminish the significance of social factors. The laws of the novel, he argues, differ from those of drama which rightly places its important figures at the centre.

By depicting the collision of one social order with another the drama is necessarily historical. But the fewer the social props, the better the play. *Lear,* the greatest family drama of all literature, generalises in quintessential human terms the severing of filial, feudal bonds. (The details of Lear's life, his marriage, Gloster's marriage—all the explanatory data which would have to go into a novel—can be omitted without worrying a spectator.) But Renaissance England is not quite as homogeneous as Athens. At the dawn of bourgeois society public and private are still fairly intimately related. Yet Shakespeare's plays already reveal them as separate and antagonistic spheres of life. Later drama proves unable to cope with the increasing specialisation and complexity of bourgeois society in which the connections between man as citizen and man as private person appear ever more remote and accidental. Epic, although like drama concerned with the public deeds of men, yet because it deals more intrinsically with development rather than crises and can range over time in a way which is forbidden to drama, proves better able to adapt itself to the literary needs of bourgeois society. It loses its overt public character. As the printing-press destroys a public audience and the art of recitation, so the novel, heir of epic, follows the fortunes of private men through the prosaic by-ways of everyday life. Yet its task remains to give a public meaning to these individual destinies, to make sense of the apparent accidentality of life.

The French Revolution produces a new, but short-lived, historical drama, which cannot take root in the subsequent age of bourgeois prose. The brave dramatists of this period—Goethe, Büchner, Pushkin—base themselves on Shakespeare, buttressing his principles with their more factual historicism. But the typical literary genres of this epoch are the historical and then the historicised contemporary novel. The chief dialectical lesson of the French Revolution—the understanding of revolution as a "nodal point" (Hegel) of evolution—is one which the novel is more fitted to assimilate. As the product of a more advanced bourgeois society the novel acquires historical consciousness later than the drama, a consciousness both more precise and more conscious. Yet it can never match the universality of drama which may

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neglect the cumulative facts to concentrate on a historical collision in pure, "anthropological" terms.

Such are the bare bones of Lukács's theoretical enquiry; again my account does him scant justice. In my criticism I shall limit myself to four main issues: Romanticism, the relations between outlook and art, drama and the problem of genres.

Romanticism

Romanticism was one of the aspects which troubled Raymond Williams, though in a short review he could only raise the subject. Many readers were no doubt surprised to see Scott pitted against the Romantics. Is then the traditional notion of Scott as a Romantic wrong? Is Romanticism a bad word? For Lukács it invariably is: it describes a reactionary literary movement. He would have the best writers of the Romantic period called realists: Scott, Goethe, Pushkin, Manzoni, Balzac; even Byron threatens to enter this list (p. 33).

The more obvious Marxist view of the matter seems to me also the more balanced. Arnold Kettle expresses it in the chapter on Scott in his *Introduction to the English Novel*. He shows there how the Romantics aimed at a more inclusive and popular Realism than the eighteenth century aristocratic convention permitted and yet often floundered in "vagueness and individualist frustration", becoming "romantic in the pejorative sense", because of the difficulty of finding "a positive force upon which to base their work and aspirations". When Kettle examines *The Heart of Midlothian* it is to ask how Scott succeeds "in responding to the liberating influences of Romanticism without losing himself (as he does, for instance, in *Ivanhoe*) in the world of romance."

Lukács does not make this kind of distinction between one Scott novel and another. They are all for him equally objective: Scott in every case bases himself on the "positive force" of the people. Kettle discovers in the paternalist landowner *both* the escapist Romantic (whom Leslie Fiedler, for instance, seizes upon one-sidedly) and the humane antagonist of the Industrial Revolution who shares "the plight and problems of the Lowland peasantry" and is thereby enabled to write from their standpoint.

The Writer's Personal Outlook

This brings me to what I consider the most serious fault in Lukács, the underplaying of the writer's personal outlook—in fact the "objectivism" for which he has been criticised by other Marxists. Lukács for instance turns Scott's historical novel into a paradigm for any future historical novelist. The form which Scott invents, states Lukács, is the form which history requires. But this depends, as we have seen, on Scott's "middle-of-the-road" hero who brings into personal contact two opposing sides. Now everyone knows and has said that these heroes (together with their heroines) include Scott's weakest characters. Lukács himself points out how much of Scott's own personality is in them. How then does one resolve their emotional superficiality with their "world-historical" role as pivots of the only possible type of historical novel? Lukács's approach places him in an impossible position. What he in fact does is to transform Scott's petty-aristocratic attitudes, embodied in these "average" heroes, into an "objective" instrument of literary history, his argument amounting to: no moderate Tory, no historical novel. The underplaying of Scott's outlook indeed here turns into its opposite. Scott's personal weaknesses become his artistic strengths.

This criticism is not intended to belittle Scott's strategy of deploying his stories round "middle-of-the-road" heroes. But such characters, most of them, have no depth. Lukács seems unwilling to accept this weakness as such, but must willy-nilly squeeze it into the "objective" structure he has found for Scott. This means in fact explaining away the weakness and indeed turning it by apparent paradox into a virtue.

Outlook and Art

Lukács's customary view of the relationship between outlook and work is this. A writer's ideological limitations do not matter so long as he can rise above them in his actual writing. That is, the process of creation, if he submits to it without reserve, should refine his art of all the prejudices, errors etc. of his normal outlook. Ostensibly, all Lukács does here is to rephrase Engels's description of Balzac's realism. Yet only ostensibly, for Lukács, instead of discovering the contradiction between ideology and art, political views and artistic creation *inside* the work itself, reshapes the contradiction into one between the essential work which is objective and the writer's views which are subjective and inessential. (At least this is true of his approach to the realists; it differs for the naturalists of whom I shall say something presently.)

But Lukács does not stop here. The subjective, inessential views must also be historically necessary if a great realist work is to be produced. That is, not *any* "false consciousness" will catalyse an "objective reflection" of reality, but only the right kind, the historically appropriate. Thus, to take another example, Tolstoy produced his great

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Realism by orienting himself on a progressive social movement, the Russian peasantry, yet he also shared all their backward-looking illusions. Such illusions were "historically necessary". Once again, as with Scott, the appropriateness of the illusions cancels out any distorting effect they may have on the work of art. Again the ideological limitations become the artistic strengths. Fortunately, Lukács never carries out this critical procedure quite as stringently as I have stated it.

It will be seen that Lukács makes a mystique of artistic creation in the sense that once a writer submits to this "objective logic" he can do no wrong. Are we not back with any objective idealist philosophy which sees God or the Spirit acting through the "inspired" artist?

Lukács has to admit the mediocrity of Scott's "middle-of-the-road" heroes. But his approach disables him from bringing Scott's greatness, as the first novelist to give living embodiment to historical forces, into a natural unity with his weakness as a Romantic "in the pejorative sense". He makes the structure of the historical novel impossibly both dependent on and independent of Scott's "prejudices". This is not just a logical but a dialectical muddle. In Lukác's "Realism", a writer's views are both unimportant and absolutely important. His ideas may be wrong, but it is the right kind of wrong ideas which will make him a great writer.

Thereby Lukács short-circuits the relationship between artist and history. An artist is not only great for doing the right thing by history, but also for doing justice to himself. Kettle, for instance, criticises Scott's lack of personal "integrity" in certain novels or again compares Jane Austen's "intensity" with the "complexity" of relationships which issues from a broader social scene in Scott. For Kettle, therefore, qualities like "integrity" and "intensity" have a contribution to make to imaginative literature. I do not think Lukács gives them adequate attention.

It is this consideration which is so important when we look at Lukács's treatment of the naturalists. Again and again he pays tribute to the "artistic integrity" of Flaubert but argues that he was unable to resist the decadent tendencies of his age. No one would wish to quarrel with Lukács's analysis of the social characteristics of Western Europe after 1848 and their damaging influence on art. But can one, therefore, conclude that the critic has the right "to judge and condemn the artistic products of entire periods (p. 334) simply because their condemnable qualities were historically inevitable? Lukács himself shows that Flaubert's hatred of capitalist society conflicted fruitfully with his theory of *impassiveness* and invigorated the Realism of his contemporary novels. Here then he talks sensibly about a conflict within a writer's outlook and thereby within his work. But this conflict does not in principle differ from Scott's paternalist conservatism *versus* popular sympathies. Lukács has it that the prejudices of a naturalist will do more damage to his art because the naturalist is socially too isolated to sharpen himself against any "positive force" in popular life, and the "positive force" itself, the new labour movement, is still in its infancy. Hence if in Realism the writer's overt ideology may be thwarted, in Naturalism it will run its course. But as we have seen in Flaubert it is not just a question of "prejudices" doing harm, but of positive hatred and personal integrity doing good.

Popular Spirit

The same disproportion between a writer's outlook and his work recurs in the chapter on the "democratic humanists". It is unimportant, urges Lukács, that these writers are not Marxists. What is important is that they, like Scott, should be rooted in popular life. Over and again Lukács contrasts the progressive politics of the "democratic humanists" with Scott's conservatism, always to Scott's advantage. Now this insistence on popular roots, popular spirit must be a bedrock of Marxist criticism. As I showed at the outset it is this which stirred non-Marxists most of all. But popular spirit cannot simply do service for a political or social outlook. Lukács uses the term in too general a way, blurring, I think, the more specific notion of "class". And this has repercussions on his attitude to a writer's outlook. In the case of the nineteenth century realists an immersion in popular life could resist or accommodate a reactionary outlook. But in the twentieth century writers face a clear socialist perspective. Lukács himself no longer accepts that a reactionary outlook can be at all helpful or indeed innocuous.

Unlike the naturalists the "democratic humanists" have a promising perspective, they have a "positive force" on which to ground themselves. But surely if they do ground themselves on, say, the Popular Front, they must come up against Marxism and to some kind of terms with it. If Lukács criticises the "enlightenment" attitude to history and people in the novels of the "democratic humanists", does he not thereby criticise their political thinking which is inseparable from their art? Here surely their response to Marxism is most relevant. If Lukács hopes that a deeper involvement with the Popular Front will help the "democratic humanists" to

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understand more profoundly the role of people in history, then he must also hope—at least implicitly—that they will come nearer to a Marxist viewpoint. Should he rejoin that Scott was not a Marxist, yet understood the part played by people in history, and that this was all that one should ask of the historical novelist, one must reply that Scott was more concerned, as Lukács himself shows, with people as victims rather than makers of history. And it is as makers that socialism regards them.

This does not mean that a socialist writer must henceforth depict the people as conscious makers of history throughout the past. But his socialist orientation will inevitably colour his whole approach to the historical process. As Lukács eloquently says, he will be writing against a "dawn" not a "sunset".

Scott was able to share his sympathy for the uprooted peasantry with his paternalism as a landowner. It is impossible to repeat such a position today. To have popular sympathies today—say, with the national liberation movement or the unemployed—means to have a pronouncedly progressive political outlook. So much Lukács would agree. But this involves more than being immersed in popular life and aware of a socialist perspective. It involves taking up, consciously or unconsciously, sooner or later, a particular class standpoint within the wider context of "popular life"; although this by itself is no substitute for firm roots in the whole of one's society, and Lukács is quite right to press this point home again and again.

Of course, all this applies to the historical novel. The question of outlook cannot be nearly so immediate in more psychological and lyrical writing, though it is certainly not irrelevant there either.

Question of Genre

The too extensive category of "popular life" lies at the root of all the weaknesses in Lukács's book. It affects his account of drama and his theory of the genres. I shall mention just two points relating to drama which will lead straight into the question of genre. First, the disintegration of a homogeneous public and the decline of drama. Certainly great drama is more difficult to create in a complex society. But are we justified in concluding that drama is no longer the "appropriate" literary form for post-Renaissance society? Can we talk about *one* typical form for one particular age? Can we establish canons of this kind which artists transgress at their peril? Not that Lukács banishes the drama, but he relegates it to a very subordinate place. Modern drama, he suggests, belongs properly in the novel which deals with all the fragmentary, inconsequential conflicts of private life. But upon the drama as such devolves the Sisyphean task of eliciting a significant public moment from all these tangles. On the whole Lukács treats the modern playwright as a novelist in disguise (cf. his remarks on Ibsen). The dramatic novel is therefore a "lawful" development, the novelised drama "unlawful".

Secondly, Shakespeare's historicism. Lukács asks how it is that Shakespeare and his contemporaries should have had a *historical* attitude two centuries before the French Revolution gave rise to what we understand today by historicism. His answer boils down to this: that the drama deals with conflict *par excellence*, that it was the fitting form for an age passing from one social order into the next, that it was rooted in a fairly homogeneous community which is necessary for the drama though not for the novel. These factors may be the right ones for drama, but do they necessarily produce a historical sense? Shakespeare and his contemporaries were certainly sensitive to conflict and change, but did they understand history as a process? Lukács himself writes: "what interested these writers—and Shakespeare above all—was not so much the . . . actual historical causality responsible for the decline of feudalism, as the human collisions" (p. 153). This may mean that, unbeknown to themselves, they will be historically illuminating for a later age. But that is not at issue here.

The question is: can we talk of a general historical consciousness in Shakespeare's time comparable to that released by the French Revolution? Again Lukács writes: "Shakespeare's dramatic practice towers above the general theoretical appreciation of history in his time" (p. 160). The same cannot be said of Scott's historical novel; it stemmed, as Lukács shows, from a universal historical awareness. The historical consciousness of Shakespeare's time would appear then only to exist within the drama.

What is at fault here, I think, is Lukács's too general sociology of the arts. A period of transition and a relatively homogeneous public may throw up a great school of drama but will not necessarily produce a specifically *historical* consciousness.

Artistic Form

To derive artistic form from too general a sociology is to weaken the links between them. The form itself becomes too general, broad, fixed, unhistorical therefore, assimilating an artist's sensibility, vision, social position and outlook to its own perennial necessities. Lukács states in his

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preface that he has tried to apply Lenin's dictum on logic (namely that syllogisms are abstract instances of the reflection of reality) to the development and differentiation of the genres. But logic is both truly abstract in a way in which literary forms are not and far less responsive to historical and social change.

The genres derive originally from individual works of art, that is the imaginative statements, collective or personal, of people passionately engaged in some way or another. Literary form cannot have a proper existence outside such works. This is not to deny a phenomenology and morphology of forms peculiar to art. Lukács, for instance, makes an interesting analysis of the *motifs* of "retrogression" and "progression" in epic, novel and drama. The rhythm of Homeric epic, he shows is determined by Poseidon's anger which delays Odysseus's return and creates the numerous episodes. That of the novel is governed by the social circumstances which in modern times replace the gods and, even more than they, thwart the hero from his imagined goals. This is the law of "retrogression". In the drama, on the other hand, everything depends on the unpausing race of the characters towards the *dénouement,* the resolution of their conflicts. This is the law of "progression". But the social basis of such *motifs* is very general. And forms and laws such as these, originally derived from universal human experience, can easily turn into aesthetic tyrants.

Lukács takes his cue here from Goethe and Schiller who revolted against the miscegenation of genres propagated and perpetrated by the Romantics to illustrate a chaotic view of life. In delimiting the genres they were defending a rational outlook. Yet theirs was a contemplative aesthetic which resisted social action and sheltered them from the chaos which the Romantics treated at face value.

'Great Man' in Drama and Novel

Let us take the categories of Realism and Naturalism which hold good for many ages. They are yet a secondary factor in artistic creation (and criticism). What comes first is the artist's personal engagement with his society, his sensibility, vision, social position and outlook. It is by assessing these, from one's own social position etc., that one can then judge of the method or genre he uses, how he uses it, whether he crossbreeds and is right or wrong to do so. Brecht's anti-Aristotelian "epic theatre" is a case in point. I have no space to discuss it here, but its artistic fruitfulness in our time is beyond question.

One final example on which I shall close: the great historical figure in drama and novel. Lukács asserts as an immutable law that the "great man" must be central to drama and episodic to the novel. Let us consider this from a social rather than formal standpoint. Naturally, Lukács traces his law to social factors, but again they tend to be too generally conceived. His social basis for the dramatic hero is, as we have seen, the homogeneous society which makes it possible to embody a public theme *directly* in one individual. Because the play must move quickly, lasting a bare two to three hours, it must appear to take place in the immediate present, so that the character is everything, his background little or nothing. The historical novel, on the other hand, reflects a society whose expectations have been disappointed, which feels the need to explain itself, to take stock, to trace the genetic connections between past and present. Such diverse and detailed links cannot be embodied in any one or two individuals. Hence the "great man" can only have the function of "summing up" at certain crucial points of the novel. Such is Lukács's sociological distinction between the position of the "great man" in drama and the novel. His argument is considerable but not, I think, sufficient. To rephrase: let us consider it from the standpoint of social attitudes rather than sociological form.

Pioneer Work

Scott reacted against an aristocratic view of history which placed great men at the centre of events. On the other hand Alexei Tolstoy, writing in Soviet Russia, shared none of the distrust for Peter the Great of his older namesake for whom all so-called "great men" were ludicrous figures. His novel *Peter the Great* is biographical. Yet it does not neglect the people; they too are makers of history. Therefore, the portrayal of Peter is not strained. It does not have to carry too much as in the biographical historical novel of "decadence" which Lukács berates. Here then we can interpret and justify a change in form by measuring it against changing social circumstances and attitudes.

But having made one's criticism one is left with a sense of gratitude for having been so stimulated. Above all I hope I have begun a discussion, since whatever his answers Lukács has bravely raised the most fundamental questions of aesthetics. He himself presents his book modestly as an essay towards a Marxist aesthetics and asks others to modify his conclusions if necessary. We should certainly respond in this spirit. No Marxist before Lukács has attempted a general account of the rise and fall of literary forms. His is a pioneer work. He has roughed out a theoretical

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map which we may alter and refine as we need. By doing so we shall repay our debt to him. Our own Marxists have made important investigations into the rise of drama, poetry and the novel (Thomson, Caudwell, Fox, Kettle). It would be beneficial to compare notes with Lukács now that Merlin Press has generously undertaken to translate his entire *opus*.

Discussion contribution on:

What Does Music Express?

George Burn

THE thorny question of what music expresses is made more difficult to thrash out when we are urged to ignore Stravinsky's writings about his music and to concentrate examination of his meaning on his music only. Many listeners feel that many of Stravinsky's compositions do, indeed, confirm what he writes, that music is powerless to express anything at all. However, even if all his compositions were full of clear meaning, unmistakeably felt by average listeners, it could not be accepted that the composer's own writings about what he intends the music to convey should deny that any human feelings at all are expressed. The written word and the notes of music are both forms of communication and one should complement the other.

North-East Miners' Songs

This is nowhere better seen than in the songs of the mining community of Durham and Northumberland. In his admirable collection of coalfield songs, *Come All Ye Bold Miners*, A. L. Lloyd illustrates clearly and beyond doubt the marriage between words and music in the numerous songs of the mining areas, producing music for all sorts of occasions. These songs, which have meant much to miners and have proved in experience that they have the power to move mountains, have been and are close to the heart of the people. Some in their words and in their music express the feelings of miners at work, others express their feelings at play. There are typical love songs and others give expression to the human feelings about the perils down the mines. Plenty of them give expression to the discontent of coal-miners and speak of direct political action, including strikes, battles against house-evictions and the long struggle to build strong trade-unionism.

These songs and the thousands of others springing from the experiences of other sections of the people are the very basis of music and what it expresses. To quote A. L. Lloyd:

> " . . . Many of them (these songs) were made up not so much to decorate life, as to make it bearable. . . .
>
> "Some of these songs, then, have not been sung for singing's sake, but to lift a weight off a miner's heart. Such songs may show the mettle of men clearer than a shelf of history books."

Further Development

To the extent that the more elaborate compositions, orchestral works, operas and chamber works weave their development around this wealth of basic material in the simple but meaningful songs and dances of the common people, they give more refined expression to the wide range of human emotions traditionally voiced in simple forms of music. Viewing the expression of human emotions in this way, it is evident that, however complex a musical composition is, the emotions it expresses are human emotions of one sort or another. Far from being nebulous qualities, these are all very clear and can be seen so in the simple forms of music. If the idea of specifically musical emotions is to be discussed, defining them as other than human emotion, Michael Short should have illustrated what he means by such feelings. There is really no such thing and the lasting effect of a "classical" musical composition grows from its skilful presentation of deep genuine human emotions.

National Music

In discussing the question of national characteristics, it is useful again to start with the style of

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the coalfield songs. Not only have their features been affected by the particular muscular efforts involved in mining, but also the whole range of geographical and other conditions of a mining district and the sounds produced there could be detected in the intonations of the words used and their corresponding notes of music. Farther north than the coalfield area of Northumberland, one of the oldest traditional musical instruments was the Northumberland pipe, the "small pipes", using a characteristic scale of notes and many melodies have developed special characteristics through being popularised by being played on the Northumberland pipes. Again, Northumberland dances have their own lilt and metre. Can we envisage all these features being internationalised and losing their identity? Is it not rather the fact that true internationalism is best served by national composers being true to their native environments and particular associations by constructing musical works on the foundations provided by their national music in its simplest forms, retaining its characteristic features?

In this connection, Tom Russell does not prove his point that national differences in music are ignored in practice by the example that Janacek's Czechoslovakian opera *Katy Kabanova* can be heard in translation into English or German. When he says that the music has to adapt itself to another language, all he is saying is that it has to be arranged just enough for the acccompanying words in a different language to be intelligible. But, despite such arranging, the music retains strongly the basic national characteristics of its country of composition. The language of the music itself is still moulded around the same musical phrases and it continues to reflect the inflections and rhythms of the original. If the best composers of every country base themselves on these principles, they will speak most honestly to people of all nationalities. The words can be translated; the music will establish the strongest links between peoples to the degree that it reflects the way in which the human emotions are expressed by the people among whom the composer lives. To minimise the importance of national characteristics of music is equivalent to suggesting the superseding of separate national languages by one universal international word-language. Englishmen speaking English can exchange ideas with Frenchmen speaking French and few people doubt the value of preserving all separate national languages. Music crosses frontiers and conveys human feelings without needing to have its national features purged out of it. Far from impeding its transcending national barriers, they add colour to the form of its message.

The Fight for Peace

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NOW that 1963 is coming to an end, we take the opportunity of listing the new Marxist books we published in the year. There were fifteen of them. And in wishing readers of *Marxism Today* a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year, we would like to say—*don't get behind with your reading.* For there will be at least fifteen new books in 1964 (including a volume on Shakespeare for the fourth centenary of his birth).

Our three top books in 1963, in terms of sales, were *The Challenge of Marxism* (21s.); *The Labour Government 1945-51* by D. N. Pritt (37s. 6d.); and *Problems of Contemporary History* by R. Palme Dutt (7s. 6d.; library edition 15s.).

We will remind you of the rest in ascending order of price. This year we could publish only two short books at 5s. or less (but two extremely good ones): *Economic Growth and Underdeveloped Countries* by Maurice Dobb (3s. 6d.), and *Socialism in Britain* by A. L. Morton (5s.).

At 7s. 6d. we published as paperbacks: *Lectures on Marxist Philosophy* by David Guest; *Twentieth-Century Capitalism* by Eugene Varga; and *Spain 1936-39* by J. Sandoval and M. Azcarate.

Coming up to 12s. 6d., there was *The Tory Years*, a smasher for election campaigning, by Alan Brown. At 15s. there was *A Philosophy of Man* by Adam Schaff (which contains a Marxist critique of existentialism). And at 18s. there was a new novel about Lancashire, very well reviewed in the Lancashire press, *Gild the Brass Farthing* by Brian Almond.

At 21s. there were *Africa the Way Ahead*, the third of three books on Africa by Jack Woddis; *What is Philosophy?* by Howard Selsam; and the new edition of *Political Economy* by John Eaton. Lastly, at 30s., there was a splendid new book from the U.S.A., *Militarism and Industry* by Victor Perlo.

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